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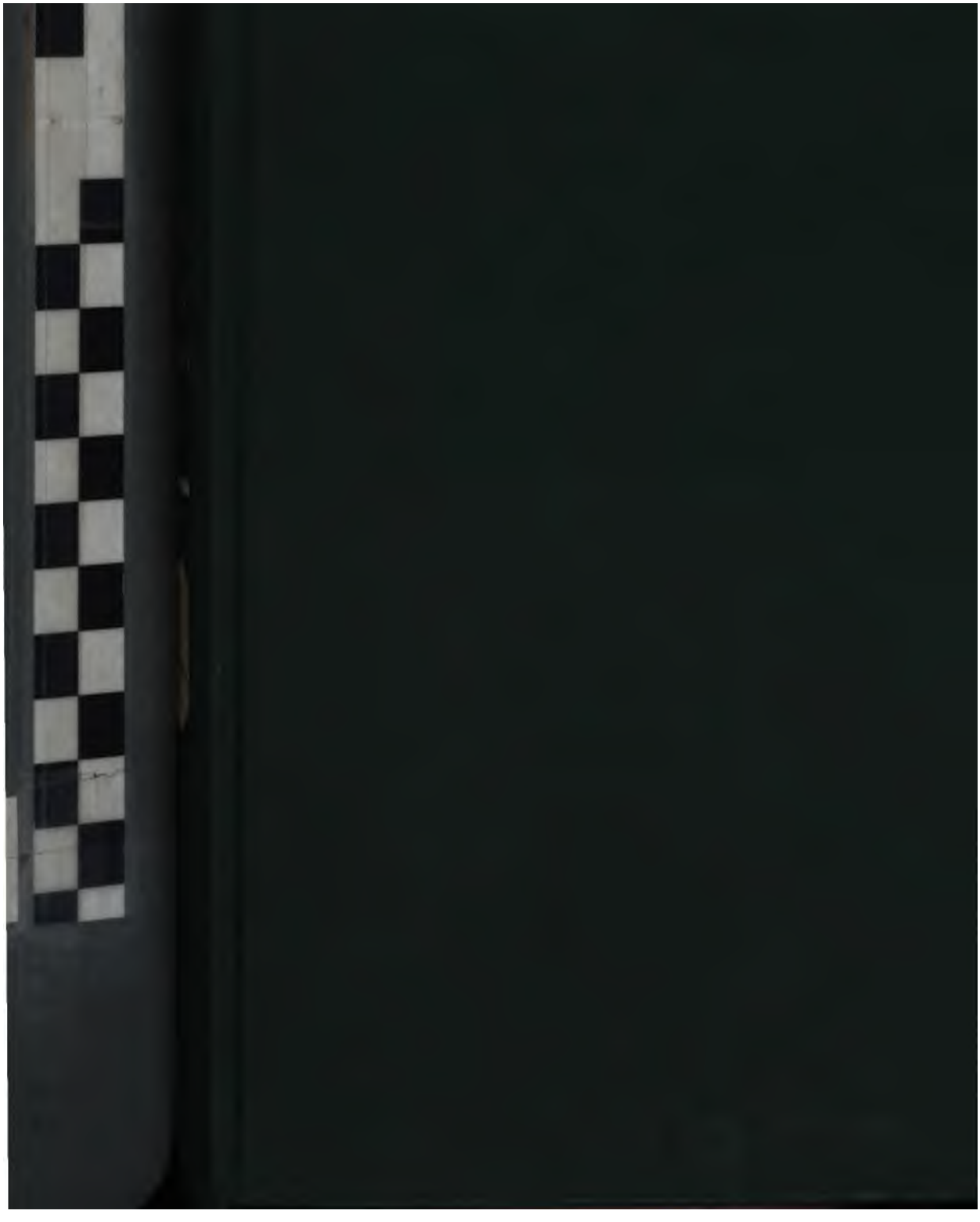

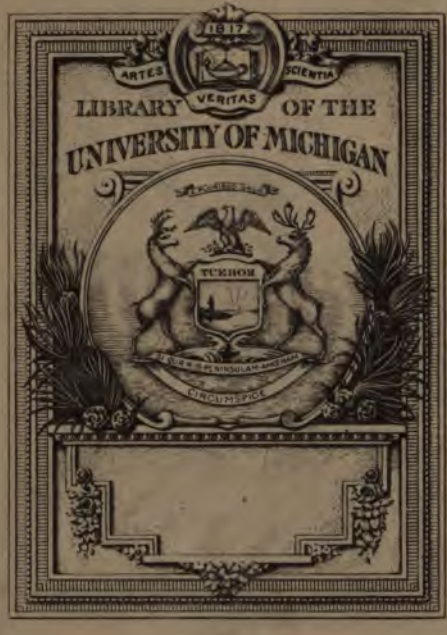
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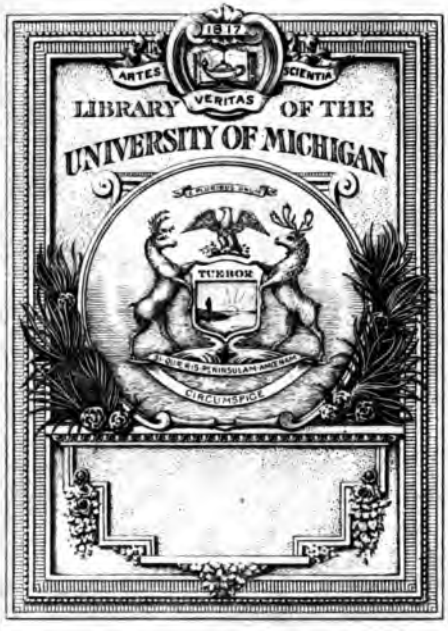
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MORLEY ERNSTEIN

OR

THE TENANTS OF THE HEART.

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MORLEY ERNSTEIN

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OR

THE TENANTS OF THE HEART.

BY

G. P. R. JAMES, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"THE ROBBER," "THE GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL,"

ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1842.

TO

ALGERNON LORD PRUDHOE.

My Dear Lord,

Although my sole wish is to offer you what I know is but a very poor testimony of respect, I fear I cannot even escape the imputation of seeking my own advantage in asking your permission to dedicate this work to you; for although you have not, I believe, posts and honours to bestow, nor distinctions to distribute, yet certainly your name will confer no light benefit upon the work, and no small honour on the author. I am, indeed, aware that the gain must be all on my side, and that those whose good opinion is the most valuable, when they see to whom this

book is dedicated, will take his name as a passport to their favour. It may seem to be saying, perhaps, too much in favour of my own production, to assure you, that, did I not believe that, in one respect at least, it will not be found unmeet for your acceptance, I would not offer it to you, who are so well fitted to judge of its merits or demerits. But there is a sort of confidence distinct from vanity, and founded upon a better basis than even public applause,—it is the consciousness of high and good purposes, however feeble or faulty may be the execution. Others, who can judge better than I can, assure me that, even in the latter point, the work is less unworthy than many of its predecessors; but, were it ten times better than anything I ever have written or shall write, it would afford but an inefficient testimony of my respect and esteem.

I cannot help referring to the time when first I had the honour of making your acquaintance, and to hours which we then passed

together with many things to make them bright, —fine scenery, exquisitely beautiful paintings, and conversation not easily forgotten. It was one of those oases in Time, round which generally extends a desert. The most sorrowful event of my life has taken place since, which makes me generally seek to avert my look from the past; but there is one picture of those times, painful but dear, in which your Lordship bears no ungracious part, and which must be ever present to the eye of memory.

There may be some people who prefer respect to regard, and some would choose the latter rather than the former; but it is the meed of few to command both, in that high degree with which they are felt for your Lordship, by

Your most faithful servant,

G. P. R. JAMES.

The Shrubbery, Walmer,
25th April, 1842.

PREFACE.

In a work called the "Ancient Régime," I deviated considerably from the usual course of my works of fiction, and entered upon a different field; but not without a motive, and not without much consideration. Neither was it an unnatural transition, but rather a consequence of my former efforts, to which I had long looked forward, and for which I had prepared. One of the hopes I had entertained, and one of the great objects which I had proposed to myself in most of my preceding works, was to elevate the feelings and moral tone of those who read them, by displaying the workings and results of the higher and better qualities peculiar to times of old—ancient courtesy, generous self-devotion, and the spirit of chivalrous honour. I say, that this was one great

object in the general scheme of my writings, though I do not pretend to deny, that in each separate romance which has proceeded from my pen, I have had a particular view which I wished to inculcate: perhaps—if I may be forgiven for putting on the pedagogue—a particular lesson which I sought to enforce. A time came, however, when it was necessary to show the same qualities, of which I have spoken above, in our own, or very nearly our own days, to depict them mingling with the things of ordinary life, to trace out their operation upon men under circumstances familiar to our minds at present, and thus to bring them home more immediately to the hearts, for which I write. Such was one of the purposes of the "Ancient Régime;" but as readers generally expect to find an author in the same path where they left him, and are inclined to believe that it is hardly possible he can do well in any other, I did not feel at all sure that public approbation would follow me in the transition. The favour with which that work was received, however, was so great, that I now proceed with confidence in the same course, and only hope for the same indulgence in this instance which I obtained in that.

It is my belief, that no person, who merely sits down to tell a story, will ever write what is deserving of the name of a good work. He may make it, perhaps, an amusing one—he may make it an interesting one, but it will never possess those qualities which impress a book deeply and lastingly on the memory of the reader, and raise the author high in the estimation of his fellow-men, unless there be the energetic purpose of inculcating, under the garb of fiction, some strong and peculiar truths with which the writer's mind is powerfully imbued. It is then, and only then, that works of fiction become really valuable; and did I not hope—ay, and trust—that my own will have, and indeed have had, some influence upon the tone and character of a portion of my fellow-men, I should feel strongly disposed not to write another line.

In regard to the plot and the conduct of the present work, I have very little to say, they will develop themselves sufficiently to the reader as he goes on, if he is induced to peruse it to the end. Nevertheless, there were some difficulties inseparable from the story, as I had conceived the plan, in regard to which I may be permitted to offer a few words of explana-

tion. In depicting the career of a young man, setting out unrestrained, at the age of one-and-twenty, with a large fortune and strong passions, it was impossible to adhere to nature without shewing that he fell into errors, and touched upon vices; but it was still more necessary so to do, when I placed at his side a tempter of consummate art, for the express purpose of displaying the struggle which so frequently takes place in our mixed nature, between the earthly impulses of mere animal life and the purer purposes of the immortal soul—a struggle in which we may well suppose two opponent spirits are engaged, the one terrestrial, the other heavenly in its nature—which spirits, indeed, are what I mean to imply by the words—"The Tenants of the Heart."

In adhering to truth of delineation, however, and making the hero of the tale, though endowed with many high qualities and guarded by very strong principles, but a fallible human being, I have avoided depicting scenes of vice, though I have been obliged to glance at their existence. I may be wrong, and the judgment of many very excellent writers is against me, I know; but still I cannot help thinking, that no moral can be sufficiently strong and overpower-

ing to counteract the evil which is produced by familiarizing the mind, especially in youth, with the details of guilty passion. It is against all my own interests, as a writer, thus to abstain, for I narrow my own field, and cut myself off from a thousand topics of deep interest, from a thousand sources of the terrible, the moving, and the sublime. But though fully aware of the disadvantage to myself, and knowing that it requires tenfold exertions, if not tenfold powers of mind to produce, with the materials which I allowed myself, the same emotions in my readers, which others less reserved accomplish with ease, I took my resolution early, have still adhered to it, and shall not swerve from it now.

So much for the general conduct of the story. In regard to the personages of the tale, I have but little to say. The character of the tempter, Lieberg, is a peculiar conception, comprising qualities adapted to the purpose I had in view, but which were never, perhaps, united in one human being, but which are not anomalous or repugnant to each other, so that fiction has every right, I imagine, to gather them into one focus, or, in other words, to bestow them upon one character.

Three principal female personages are intro-

duced; and I have endeavoured to keep them perfectly separate and distinct from each other —all women, but each an individual type of a distinct class. The one is intended to act as a sort of counterbalancing power to the tempter, producing a beneficial operation on the mind of the hero, by means of a high-toned and virtuous attachment. The second, Helen Barham, may, I trust, serve to display the virtues and fine qualities which adorn some women, and might adorn all in circumstances of sorrow, distress, and disappointment. She is not, indeed, "a faultless monster that the world ne'er saw;" nor what will be generally considered the heroine of the book, but I think her character may have its effect upon those who read and mark. In the termination of her history, I would not suffer myself to be influenced by the conventional modes of disposing of personages whom we know not what to do with, but endeavoured to make her character harmonious and consistent to the end.

In regard to the third, Veronica, I shall only say that she, also, is a type, of which every man who has seen much of the world must have met some modifications; whose passions, talents, good intentions, high purposes, and misdirected

enthusiasms, form a character often dangerous to others, and almost certain of producing misery to the person by whom it is possessed.

I have also, in this work, introduced a man in the lower ranks of life, faulty and criminal, but with the germs of undeveloped principles and generous feelings in his nature. I have boldly and fearlessly made him escape the punishment due to his crimes, and have represented his escape, and the means by which it is effected, as the cause of a complete change of character and life. I know that this course may be censured, when stated in the broad and straightforward manner in which I now put it; but I have drawn his history, and wrought out the circumstances connected with it, from no sympathy with criminals and evil-doers, but because I believe that harsh laws produce bad men, and crush out, in hearts not utterly sterile and waste, that germ of hope through repentance, which it was God's will that Christ should plant and cultivate. I have done it, because I believe that the law of every country in Europe has considered punishment much more than reformation—because I believe that the manner in which the law is carried out, the treatment of suspected persons, the contaminating habits of prisons, penitentiaries, and penal colonies,

the obstacles, in short, that are cast in the way of return, and the education, if one may so call it, in evil which all our customs afford, when once man or woman has entered into the awful school of vice, render reformation almost impossible—because I believe that, even in the morbid and maudlin feeling which exists amongst some men towards those notorious criminals, in regard to whom there is but one course, may be seen the revulsion of the public mind from a system which gives no chance of a return to right, and the foundation from which, perhaps, may arise a new science, having for its object to amend rather than to destroy, and by which justice, tempered with mercy, may lead to repentance, rather than doom to death, or force into a continuance in evil. Having learned that the sword of justice by falling too frequently gets blunt and inefficacious, we have made vast and wise efforts in mitigating punishment; but there are two sciences, of which, as yet, we know little or nothing, and do not even conceive or believe that they may be carried out to very vast results: that of educating a whole people for good; and that of combining punishment for crime with encouragement to reformation.

MORLEY ERNSTEIN:

OR,

THE TENANTS OF THE HEART.

CHAPTER I.

"Pouvons nous pas dire, qu'il n'y a rien en nous, pendant cette prison terrestre, purement, ni corporel ni spirituel?" asks good old Montaigne, and certain it is that in many an act where we imagine the body alone takes part, the spirit has as great a share; and in many a thought where the mind seems to divest herself of clay, the impulse was given by the body, not the soul. But besides the contention between the corporeal and spiritual part of our nature, and the sort of swindling that goes on on both sides, he that looks into his own heart must acknowledge with him of old, that there seem to be

two spirits within us. I do not only mean two spirits distinguished by their promptings to good and evil, but two principles separate in their nature, in their objects, and in their ultimate dwelling-place, the one tending to the earth, the other aspiring to the heavens; the one the principle of animal existence, the other the principle of immortal life; the one shared with the brutes that perish, the other that essence which raises us above them here and hereafter. What shall we call these two spirits? How shall we distinguish them, the one from the other, in speaking of them hereafter? Let us name the higher and the purer one, *the spirit of the soul;* and call the other, *the spirit of the flesh;* for both are distinct from mere intellect, which each uses as an agent, as each gains the ascendancy, or appeals to as a judge when the struggle is nearly equal. It is upon this struggle between these two principles that turns the greater part of each man's moral history.

One of the strangest points in that contest is, that the *spirit of the soul,* as we have called the one, appeals less frequently to the intellect than her earthly sister, leaving it, in general, to the latter, as if for her uses in this earth the

powers of intellect were given, while the soul obtains its impulses from other sources, and, marked out for a higher destiny, receives winged inspirations from the world to which it tends—faith, conviction, sentiment, feeling, conscience; —and oh, how often does that better spirit seize the happy moment to open the eyes which all our powers of mind could not unclose, and strip the world and all its pleasures of the delusions which no force of intellect has been equal to dispel!

At the age of one-and-twenty years——It is a beautiful age, full of the spring, with all the vigour of manhood, without one touch of its decay; with all the fire of youth, without one touch of its feebleness! Oh, one-and-twenty! bright one-and-twenty!—wilt thou never come back to me again? No, never! The cord of the bow has been so often drawn that it has lost its elasticity; there have been a thousand flowers cast away that have withered in the dust of Time's sandy path; there have been a thousand fruits tasted that have left but the rind in my hand; there have been a thousand travel stains acquired that never can be washed off till the journey is done. That which

has been lost, and that which has been gained, have both been gathered into the two baskets of the past; and whatever the future may have in store, one-and-twenty, with its many hopes, its few fears, its buoyancy of spirit, its elasticity of limb, its eagerness of expectation, its activity of pursuit, its aspirations, its desires, its faith, its confidence, its frankness, its garden of visionary flowers, and its atmosphere of misty light, can never, never come back to us, were we to whistle till we broke our hearts. No, no; in the sad arithmetic of years, multiply by what numbers you will, you can never get at one-and-twenty more than once.

At the age of one-and-twenty years, Morley Ehrenstein, or Ernstein, as it had been contracted, a gentleman—descended, as his name evinces, from a very old German family, who had made themselves a home in a foreign land, some three centuries before—sat in one of the large chambers of an English country-house, not many miles from the good town of Doncaster. No one tenanted the chamber but himself, and though it was a cheerful day of summer, and the room was one of a bright and sunny aspect, there was a degree of melancholy on the

young man's countenance, which might be difficult to account for, if we did not look a little into his heart, and pause for a moment on his previous history. Let him gaze then at the ceiling, and study the quaint arabesques into which the plaster of Paris had been drawn; let him lean his head upon his hand, and examine the pretty nothings with which his table is covered; let him gaze out of the window into the far distance, as if he were about to paint a portrait of the weather-cock on the village church; but let you and I, dear reader, first put our friend into a microscope, and note down exactly every limb and feature and sinew, as if we were true Kirbys, anatomising a moth; and then let us look in the old almanacks, to discover some of the antecedents of his present state.

The young man, then, of whom we speak, was above the middle height, powerful in limb, and though so young, with but little of the slightness of youth remaining. Health, and strength, and activity, were to be traced in every swelling muscle, and those who regard what is merely corporeal, might well pronounce him a fine animal, even when at rest. When in activity, however—when hunting, swimming, leaping, or

performing any of those rude exercises wherein Englishmen are so fond, and also so great, with the glowing cheek and expanded nostril, the flashing eye, and the strong rounded outline of every limb, he looked like a fierce young horse, before the bit has taught it the force of any other power than its own strength. In every moment of excitement the animal spirit, *the spirit of the flesh*, started up strong and bold within him; his veins seemed to be filled with molten fire, his heart to be full of eagerness and impetuosity, his whole mind one active enthusiasm. He felt within him a thirst for unceasing action of any and every kind, and had it not been for certain qualities, which we shall notice hereafter, he would have been merely one of those who look upon all things round them, as objects on which to employ their reckless energy, and life itself but as a child's plaything.

He was young, dear reader, very young, and had neither learned from the bitter teaching of years nor from any sudden and sad experience, that the face must be, as it were, a veil to hide the countenance of the heart. There are few men who reach thirty, without more or less becoming hypocrites, and still fewer women; at

least, as far as the expression of the features goes. There are some with whom the waters of time are like those of certain springs, and gradually petrify the face into a mask. There are others who retain their pliability of features, but reverse the action; cover hate and sorrow with a smile, or conceal joy and satisfaction with an air of icy indifference. There are some endowed by nature with a lineaments of marble, and some who, by habit and by art, form for themselves an India-rubber countenance, which will stretch to whatsoever they require.

Morley Ernstein was none of these. He was very young, as we have said, and nature had made his looks the reflection of all that passed in his heart. His face was as a clear stream, through which one sees to the very bottom. He had never learned to rule its expressions, and those impulses which were but too apt to sway his actions, had still more power over his countenance.

Why then did he now look so sad? Women will imagine that he was in love, for they are all inclined to say, with Alfred de Musset, that—

"La vie est un sommeil, l'amour en est le rêve."

Men—but especially Frenchmen—may be inclined to suppose, with Balzac's gamblers, when they first beheld Raphael, that there was, under his melancholy aspect, "quelque horrible mysterè;" and imagine it proceeded from some "douleur inouie." Neither of those suppositions, however, would be correct. There was no one point in his history or situation, that should have produced anything like gloom.

Morley Ernstein was born to wealth and honour; his father had died early, leaving but one child, to the care of a fond but a wise mother, who, though young and beautiful at her husband's death, kept, throughout the rest of her life, the colours of mourning in her garments and in her heart. Some six years before the time of which we now speak, she too had left this world for another state of being, and her son had fallen into hands of guardians, somewhat strict, but still prudent and kind. They had seen that his talents were great, that his mind approached, if it did not absolutely reach, the height of genius, and they had taken care that it should have such cultivation as the land afforded. They were as conscientious with the young baronet's property as with his intellect; and the old family-house

had been left in the care of two faithful good women, who had withered in the service of his ancestors, and who now shewed themselves scrupulous in maintaining everything in the same precise order, and clean propriety which had been kept up during the life of the lady of the mansion.

The guardians of Morley Ernstein had resisted all his entreaties to let him pass the vacations of school and college in his ancestral house; but on the day that he was one-and-twenty, a carriage and four horses were at the door of his temporary abode before six in the morning, and ere night he was in the dwelling of his youth. Everything had been prepared to receive him, and he had hastened from room to room, while all the moonlight joy of memory lit up each chamber with associations from the past. He slept little, and rose on the following day, to go through the accounts of guardians and executors, and he found, as paper after paper was laid before him, new cause to applaud their care and wisdom—new reason to look upon his situation as one of the brightest that man could fill. The subsequent night he slept soundly; but now, when he rose on the

day we have mentioned, which was the one that succeeded, he sat in the large drawing-room, where his mother used to pass the morning, with his head resting on his hand, the broad, fine forehead contracted, the bright dark eyes full of melancholy, the corners of his mouth turned down, gazing at things he did not see, and forgetting all the bright expectations of youth, and all the joys that hope had spread out before him.

Of what was it that he thought? Was it of his mother? No! Time had healed the only wound that fate, within his own memory, had inflicted on him; and his thoughts were of no external kind whatever. It was that *the spirit of the soul* then, for the first time, made her voice heard strongly. She might have whispered before, but now she spoke aloud. It was as a warning at the gates of life: it was as if some hand, for a moment, drew back the glittering veil with which pale reality covers her wrinkled front, and had shewn him, instead of the bright young features he expected to see, nothing but deformity and age. Unhappy is it—at the time, most unhappy—for the man, in whose mind age and youth can change places,

even for an hour. God wills us, while we are young, to view things youngly, and when the thoughts of age force themselves upon us in youth, we are like the living clasped in the cold arms of the dead.

Such, then, were the sensations of Morley Ernstein, as he sat in the house of his fathers, master thereof, master of himself, master of fortune, station, youth, strength, and expectation! Oh, how he had longed for that hour! What bright visions had risen before his eyes, of enjoyment to come! How he had strode in imagination over every field—how he had visited every cottage—how he had consoled the old servants for his long absence—how he had made in fancy, every change that he had devised in boyhood. He had dreamed bright dreams, though most innocent ones; and now the dream was accomplished—he was there, with nothing but his own will to control him in any act! Yes, the dream was accomplished, but it was ended too! Whenever we grasp life's flowers with too hot a hand, they are sure to wither almost ere they reach our bosom. He had not felt as much joy as he had expected; he had been happy certainly, but he had discovered that even happiness is not the

bright thing he had thought it; and now he sat and mused, the spirit of the soul seeming to tell him, that thus he would still find it throughout the whole of life; that there is a rich ingredient wanting in the cup of mortal joy which never can be found on earth.

There was a dull oppression on his heart that he could not account for; there was a voice rang in his ear, telling of the emptiness of all human things. "But a few short years ago," he thought, "here moved my father, filled with plans and purposes, hopes and expectations, —here crowded round him the gay, the bright, the beautiful, the wise, the good—here honour waited, wealth supported, renown followed him —here, too, my mother spent days of joy and sorrow—here she looked with tenderness upon my cradle—here she watched with pride my growing years—here she often talked of the bright future with her beloved son. And they are both gone: their shadows no longer cross the household floor; the roof tree no longer echoes back their voices; their tongues are silent, and their smiles are cold; and the place where they once dwelt, now knows them no more. Thus, too, shall it be with me ere many

years have passed; my joys, my hopes, my affections shall soon be in the dust with theirs."

Such were his thoughts as he sat there, though the room was full of sunshine—though the object before his eyes were bright—though one-and-twenty years were all that he had numbered. Judge then, dear reader, whether *the spirit of the soul* was not strong within him, thus to rise and reprove the animal spirit, even at the very threshold of youth. Each was indeed powerful: the elements of earthly and immortal existence had been poured into him profusely; the eager, impassioned, vehement being of this world, was met by the calm, grand, mysterious essence of a higher sphere; and sometimes the impetuous energy of the one, sometimes the stern majesty of the other, gained the victory, and ruled the course of life.

CHAPTER II.

We will have done with the philosophy of the human heart; we will talk no more of abstract sensations—at least, for the present; we will enter into no further investigations of causes and effects; but will tell a simple story to the end; never deviating into discussions—except when it suits us; for, as the gentle reader is well aware that resolutions, whether made by man or woman, are intended from the very first to be broken, it would be hard upon a poor writer to force him to keep his better than kings, or ministers, or philosophers.

The thoughtful fit into which Morley Ernstein had fallen did not last long. The entrance of a servant dispelled it in a moment; and starting

up, as if half ashamed of the gloom that had fallen upon him, he resumed the tone of ordinary life. Youth, with its consciousness, feels as if man's bosom were but a glass case, where thoughts may be examined like curious insects, and the young man doubted not that the servant would see all that was passing within if he cleared not his brow of the shadows that covered it.

"Bring me round a horse!" he said; "I will ride out." And after taking his hat, his gloves, and his cane, he went into the old portico before the door, and sat down on one of the stone benches which flanked it on either side. The air was warm and balmy, for it was the month of May, the period of the year in which Morley had been born. There is surely something in the season of our birth which transfuses itself into our character, and, I have sometimes been inclined to think, influences our fate. Byron was born in the dark and stormy winter; Napoleon, in the fiery and blazing month of August.

Morley had first seen the light in the fitful spring; and now, in that month, when very often the heat of summer and the cold of winter struggle with each other on alternate days, espe-

cially in the land that gave him birth, he sat and watched the bright sunshine and the dark cloud chase each other over the blue sky. The scene impressed itself upon his heart and gave its hue to his feelings, for he was one of those whose bosoms are like a deep, clear lake, reflecting vividly the aspect of nature, except when the demon of the tempest sweeps over it with his ruffling wing. He felt himself falling into a new fit of thought, but resisted the inclination; and when the horse was brought round, he sprang at once into the saddle, and struck the flank with his heel. The animal darted forward, but instead of turning its head towards the gate the rider took his way at full gallop across the park, leaped the enclosure at a bound, and was soon out of the old servant's sight, who beheld him depart, with the exclamation—"He is but a boy after all!"

There was as much envy and admiration as anything else in the old man's speech; for who would not be a boy if they could?—who would not go back to the freshness of early years?—who would not shake off the burden of age and its heavy thoughts? At that very moment Morley was flying from thoughts too old for his

years; the animal spirit had resumed its sway, and, in the fiery career of the high-bred beast he rode, the energies of his own corporeal nature found exercise and joy.

A little accident happened, however, almost at the outset of his ride, which checked the speed at which he was flying over the country. We have said he leaped the enclosure of the park at a bound; but he certainly did so without thinking that any one might be upon the high road at the other side. Such was the case, however; and, as Morley Ernstein darted over the fence, he perceived a lady and a gentleman on horseback, riding gently along.

The sudden and unexpected apparition of a mounted horseman at full speed, where there had been nothing but solitude the moment before, made the lady start, but it made her horse start still more; and being of that race of animals that is restive without being spirited, the beast plunged, reared, and would have fallen backwards, but, as quick as light, Morley was upon his feet by the lady's side, and with her bridle in his firm, manly grasp. The horse became quiet instantly; it seemed as if the animal felt at once that it could not resist; and though

it passaged away from him who held it, it no longer tried to rear with that strong determination of crushing its fair rider which it had shewn at first.

The lady, however, agitated with all that had happened, slipped from the saddle, quickly but gracefully, and of course Morley Ernstein aided her to the best of his abilities, apologizing for frightening her horse, and assuring her that the animal was now quiet, that the danger was over, and adding a multitude of other things of the same kind, in a breath.

Our measures of time are all false and absurd together; we might find a thousand better clocks than any that have ever been carried up into the sky by a church steeple. Thoughts, feelings, passions, events—these are the real moral time-keepers. What is to me the ticking of a pendulum? There is many a five minutes, as they are called when measured by that false scale, that form two-thirds of a lifetime. One fortnight of existence has withered more than twenty years, cast down the barrier between youth and age, and dried up the fountains of the heart, like the simoon.

It was not exactly thus with Morley Ernstein

and the lady; but the brief moments in which all passed that I have just narrated, comprised for the young gentleman a world of other things besides. She was young and very beautiful.—Is not that enough to load the wings of a single minute with the thoughts of years, for a young man of one-and-twenty? But that was not all; hers was the sort of beauty that he had always most admired, most thought of, most wondered at. It was all gentleness and brightness, but withal resplendent with high feeling and thought. It was the mixture that we so seldom see of all that is lovely in mere corporeal form and colouring: the rich contour, the flowing lines, the warmth but softness of hue, the contrasted tints of the hair, the eyes, the cheeks, the forehead, and the lips, with the lofty, yet gentle, the tender, yet deep in expression. The young horseman had remarked all this in a moment, and he had seen that beautiful face agitated, that graceful form rendered more graceful by the effort to keep her seat upon the vicious beast that bore her. At the same time, the morning sun shone, mellowed through the foliage of a tree over head, and cast that rich mysterious yellow light upon the whole scene which is only produced when the sun-

shine falls through the green leaves that owe their brief and strange existence to his glorious beams. That light seemed to give a peculiar lustre to her face—a something that the youth, in his fond enthusiasm, could have fancied unearthly, had not the soft hand that rested upon his as he aided her to dismount, and the deep-drawn sigh of apprehension relieved, told him that she was but a being of the same nature as himself. It was all done in a moment, as I have said, and the manifold thoughts, or we may call them impressions, which took place in his bosom, were like the ripples of a moonlight sea; a thousand bright things received all at once into the mind.

Scarcely, however, had Morley Ernstein time to utter the few words which have been mentioned when the lady's companion interposed, saying—"At this time of the year, sir, one does not expect to see people flying over a park fence like madmen. The periodical season of insanity—I mean the hunting season—is at an end, and I do not wonder at the horse being surprised and alarmed."

Morley turned his eyes suddenly to the speaker's face; but he was an old man, with

grey hair, and the youth had a certain foolish reverence for age, which was much inculcated amongst those weak people, our ancestors; though it has given way very generally now, under the influence of improvement and the diffusion of knowledge. He refrained, therefore, and strangled an angry reply between his teeth, merely saying—

"I am extremely sorry I have alarmed the lady, and trust she will forgive me. You still look frightened," he continued, addressing her with a voice in which some young timidity, and the slight agitation of admiration mixed strangely with a consciousness, not so much of varied powers as of high purposes and noble feelings; "you still look frightened, and somewhat faint. Were it not better for you to repose for a moment at my house, hard by?"

"At your house!" said the gentleman, with peculiar emphasis, and gazing at him from head to foot; "I thank you, sir, but the lady can very well pursue her ride. The horse, too, will be perfectly quiet, unless he be again startled, and it is not reasonable to expect two such pleasant occurrences in one day."

The young lady bowed her head with a smile

that seemed intended and fully sufficient to compensate for the harsh coldness of her companion. "I am not faint," she said—"a little frightened; but I can well go on." She thanked him, too, for his kindness, in a somewhat lower tone; not so low, indeed, as to be unheard by either of the two who stood beside her, but still softened, and with somewhat of timidity in her manner, as if she felt that what she said to the one might not be pleasing to the other.

Morley aided her to remount, and gave her the rein, for her companion made no effort to assist her. As he did so, he gazed for one instant in her face, and his eyes met the deep blue heavenly light of hers, pouring through the dark lashes, like the first dawn of morning through the clouds of night. It was but for an instant, and bowing her head once more, she rode on, leaving him standing on the road, and marvelling still at the bright vision which had thus crossed his path, and vanished. Who has not, in his childhood, seen a shooting star cross the sky and disappear, on a bright autumn night?—and who has not then gazed long into the wide vacant heaven, to see if the shining wanderer would not appear again? Thus gazed

Morley Ernstein after the fair being that had just left him, with that sort of admiration in which wonder has so great a share.

He stood motionless, his horse's bridle over one arm, his cane drooping from his wrist, and his eyes fixed upon the receding figures, till they reached an angle of the road. They were riding slowly, and by no movement in either did it appear that they gave another thought to what had occurred — to that momentary meeting which had furnished him with so many thoughts. He had no reason to suppose they would. Perhaps, indeed, with man's true perversity, Morley might have deemed it not quite feminine if the lady had turned her head as she rode away; but yet he was mortified that she did not do so; and sighed to think that he should most likely never see her more. At the angle of the road, however—it was, perhaps, some three hundred yards distant from the spot where he stood, far enough, in short, to render features indistinct, but not to hide the gestures of the body—the two riders directed their course to the left, and then—but only for a single instant, with a glance withdrawn as soon as given—the lady turned her face towards the scene of the little incident

which had delayed her on her way. It was but for an instant, we have said; but Morley felt that in that instant she must have seen him standing and gazing after her, and in his young enthusiasm he could not but fancy that she must have seen, too, the admiration she had excited in his bosom.

Who could she be, he asked himself—Who and what? Was she the old man's daughter? He did not like to think it was so. He persuaded himself that it was not. There was not the slightest resemblance between them; his aspect was harsh, and hers was gentle; his eyes were dim, and hers were bright; his brow was brown and wrinkled, hers was fair and smooth; his hair was gray, and hers ——. But as he thus thought he smiled at himself, seeing that all the differences he had found might be solely those of age. "'Tis but that he is old and she is young," he thought; "but no! there is no resemblance, and then the voices were as different as the croak of the raven and the song of the lark—the voice which is almost always hereditary."

If not his daughter, who could she be, was the next question; and as there is always in

the bosom of every one, a ready devil to suggest that which may torment us most, he next inquired, "May she not be his wife?" In England, however, it is not so common as in other countries—where marriages are mercantile transactions, and the altar and the commune often become a mere slave-market—for men to marry girls who might be their grand-daughters; and Morley Ernstein soon determined that she could not be his wife. She might be cousin, niece, connexion—anything, in short: but neither his daughter nor his wife. His daughter! No, she was too lovely, too gentle, too bright, for the same blood to run in her veins, and in the cold ice-house of her companion's heart. His wife!—Heaven and earth! it was impossible!

The young man mounted his horse, and rode on, but more slowly than before. The very sight that he had seen had calmed him, for such is generally the first effect of very exquisite beauty. There is power in it as well as loveliness—we are impressed as much as attracted; it awakens admiration before it excites passion, and, with love as with the ocean, the calm precedes the storm. He rode on, then, thoughtfully, and many were the workings of his spirit within him.

Not long after, he reached a village, which stood upon his own property: the cottagers were all people who had known him in his youth, and though they had not seen him for six years, they all remembered him well. It was, by this time, the peasant's hour of dinner, but some one caught a sight of the young landlord as he entered the place, and the tiding spread like lightning. Every door had its occupants, and low courtesies and respectful bows greeted him as he advanced. There was a kindliness in Morley's heart, that would not let him deal coldly with any one; and, though he would fain have gone on, thinking of the engrossing subject that had taken hold of him, he could not resist the good cottagers' looks of recognition; and, dismounting from his horse, he called a boy to lead it through the village, while, walking from door to door, he spoke a few words to his humble friends.

"God bless him!" cried one, as soon as he had gone on; "he is a nice young gentleman."

"He is very like his father," observed another. "I remember his father well."

"He has got his mother's beautiful eyes, though," said a third. "Well, I do think she was the prettiest creature I ever yet did see!"

At the fourth or fifth cottage an idea seemed to strike Morley Ernstein suddenly, and he asked if any of the inhabitants thereof had seen a lady and a gentleman pass through the place on horseback, intending to follow up that enquiry by demanding who they were. But he got no satisfaction there. The cottager had been out in the fields, his wife had been cooking the dinner, and no such persons as the young gentleman described had been seen by either. He put the same question again and again at other houses, but no tidings were to be obtained; and, vexed and disappointed, he returned to his home and made enquiries there.

To the old servants he described the gentleman he had met with accurately enough; on the lady he would not venture to say much, for like all Englishmen he was keenly sensitive to a laugh, and feared to awaken the least feeling of ridicule, even in the mind of a dependent. He dwelt upon the person and dress of the horseman at large; but in regard to the lady, added only that she was young and handsome.

Human nature is very obtuse to description, and we seldom if ever find any one who either attends to or applies the details that we give, respecting any object which we wish to call up

before the mind's eye by means of the ear. Do not let poets or historians ever believe that, by the lengthened descriptions they give, the reader ever becomes impressed with the very scene or person that they themselves behold. Oh, no! the reader manufactures a scene of his own, out of some of the writer's words and many of his own imaginations or memories; or fabricates a personage out of his own fancies and predilections; but both scene and personage as unlike that which we have wished to represent as possible. Thus was it, too, with Morley Ernstein and his servants. One declared that the persons he had seen must be Mr. Ferdinand Beckford and his young wife. Mr. Beckford was the good priest of a neighbouring parish, and was just six-and-twenty years of age. Another vowed that the horseman must be Mr. Thomas Ogden, Member of Parliament for the town hard by, and the lady must be his wife. Mrs. Ogden was somewhere between forty and fifty, and though she still preserved a pretty face, her person was as round as a tub of Dutch butter. A third insisted that it was Lawyer Chancery; but Ernstein knew the lawyer, and replied—"Why he is six feet high, and I told you this person was short."

He saw that it was in vain to enquire further in that quarter, at least; and he now resolved to pursue another plan, to reverse the course of proceeding which he had proposed to follow, when he had first arrived, and to visit immediately every gentleman's house within twenty miles. His eager spirit would bear no delay, and before night he had called on five or six of the principal personages in the neighbourhood. All the gentlemen around declared that it was evident Sir Morley Ernstein intended to be very sociable; and all the ladies, who had daughters to marry, pronounced him a very charming young man; but Morley did not find what he sought.

He dined, wandered out through his beautiful park, hurried here and there till bed-time, and then cast himself down to repose, but found it not, thinking only of the places where he would call the next day, and the chances of his finding the fair girl who had so much excited his imagination. In short, the *spirit of the animal* was triumphant in his bosom for the time. Let us guard, however, the expression well against mistake. Do not let it be supposed that one evil thought found place in his bosom at that moment. He was far too young, and fresh in

heart, to admit aught to the council chamber of his bosom, which the fair girl he had seen might not herself have witnessed and approved, even supposing her to be all that her countenance bespoke her — pure, and bright, and holy, as the spirits of a better world. No! but we still say that the spirit of the animal was triumphant—the eager, active, impetuous spirit, the same that leads the lion to rush after his prey, the same that carries the warrior through the battle field—the spirit of this world's things, of mortal hopes, and passions, and affections—the spirit which, in all its shapes, in all its forms, in camps and cities, courts and cabinets, gaining both high worldly renown and the visionary immortality of fame, is still but an animal energy—the spirit of dust and ashes.

Early the next morning he rose and pursued his eager course; another and another round of hours and visits succeeded, till at length he had called on every one that he could hear or think of, within the reach of a lady's riding, and yet he had neither seen, nor obtained the least intelligence of the horseman and his fair companion. The disappointment but excited him the more for some days, and he left no means untried to relieve himself from the

irritable curiosity into which he had wrought himself.

Still, all excitements come to an end; and in time he learned to feel angry at himself for what he began to call boyish enthusiasm. He felt somewhat disgusted with the life of the country, however; and as the London season was then at its height, and everybody was carrying up their stock of faults and follies to that great mart of wickedness and vanity, from the less profitable markets of the country, he determined to see what was passing in the metropolis, and to take his part in all its energetic idleness. Be it said to his honour that he knew London well, and loved it not; but he had seen it only as a boy, under the somewhat rigid tutelage of others, and he was now to see it as a man, master of himself and of a princely fortune.

CHAPTER III.

Scarcely had Morley's visits in the country been paid, when first came four invitations to dinner, and then a grand ball was determined on by a lady, who lived near the county town, and had four sons and six daughters. Who can tell whether Morley Ernstein's appearance in the neighbourhood had aught to do with all these gay affairs. Old Miss Cumbertown, who had seen sixty and more drying summers and freezing winters pass over her, till all the sweeter essences of her nature were parched up to a dry haricot, muttered and grinned at all she heard, and prognosticated that the young gentleman would not be caught yet awhile. She knew well what it was to be disappointed in the attempt to catch a lover; and when she heard, some days after

this, that the young master of Morley Court had declined all invitations, announcing that he was about to go to town on the very day the first dinner-party was to take place, she grinned a thousand times more. It is so pleasant to see other people visited by the same misfortunes that have fallen upon ourselves!

In the meantime the young gentleman was totally unconscious that there was anything like a design upon him in any of the five invitations, or that he was creating the least disappointment in the inviters; although they did not fail to believe—for cunning always fancies itself opposed by cunning—that he partly saw through their devices.

"Oh, he gives himself great airs!" said one.

"I suppose we must beg his company in very humble terms," cried another.

But, as we have before declared, Morley was quite unconscious of offence, and never once recollected the fact either of his having the command of a number of votes for the county, or of his being an eligible match for any lady in the land. Indeed, he thought not at all of any man's daughter in Europe, except, indeed, of her whose birth, parentage, and education, he had not been able to discover.

After he had settled the period of his journey, the next thing was to settle the mode of travelling. It was very natural that, with great wealth in possession, which he had never been allowed fully to enjoy, he should dream of tasting the sweets of it in every possible manner, and that the chariot-and-four should first present itself to his imagination, as the only fitting way for him to seek the capital. He had very nearly given orders for the horses, and had visions of going at least thirteen miles an hour. Rapidity of motion is one of the inherent joys of youth and vigour—it may be called, almost, a necessity, and Morley was one of those who enjoy to the highest extent that peculiar sensation which is produced by the rapid passing of the fair objects of nature before the eye; tower and town, and church-steeple, and green fields, and bright rivers, and tall trees, and rich woods, resting just long enough upon the organs of vision to call up sweet, but undefined imaginations, and then passing away—like distant music which swells and falls upon the ear, bringing back vaguely airs that we have heard elsewhere, and leaving fancy to play them to an end.

He forgot, however, to give the order for the

horses at the hour of dinner, and afterwards he strolled out into the country round, and visited the cottages of some of the peasantry who were reported to be in a state of great poverty. He now saw real misery, for the first time, and it had a powerful effect upon him. We have not space, dear reader, to enter into the details; to paint the pale face of squalid misery, and the eager anxious eyes of hopeless destitution. Suffice it, that Morley Ernstein was young; his heart had not been hardened in the furnace of the world, and it was not originally formed of that adamantine stuff, called selfishness. He was not, as some, lavish in his bounty, from mere want of any principle of action whatsoever; but he relieved the unhappy people fully, and on his return home, gave such directions, as to prevent their falling back into misery again during his absence, except by their own fault.

After this was done, he sat and thought, and ended, by ordering a servant to go to the neighbouring town, and secure him a place in the stage-coach to London. His scheme of travelling had been changed by his visit to the poor; but not in the manner, or from the motives that many persons may imagine. It was not that he proposed to save small sums out of a princely

fortune, for the purpose of devoting the whole of that fortune to the poor, for Morley knew right well that the industrious mechanic, the artisan, the farmer, the builder—all, in short, who contribute by the labour of their hands and minds to the convenience, comfort, and welfare of their fellow-creatures, have a first claim upon those to whom God has entrusted the distribution of great wealth. He believed that though the poor, the honest and worthy poor, must be supplied, must be cared for—that though it is a duty to make up, by active charity, for the inequalities and accidents that the fundamental constitution of society, and the very nature of man must always produce—still the industrious of all classes have their great primary right, which ought to be attended to. It was not that the actual sight of misery made him purpose to deny himself anything that was rational and just in the station in which he was placed, or resolve to refrain from any expense which might encourage the industrious in all classes, but that sight had called up *the spirit of the soul* to speak within him, and to check the animal spirit which had fired his imagination. After he returned from those poor cottages, he found no pleasure in the idea of

the gay postilions and foaming horses; his mind took a sadder, a more thoughtful tone. He felt almost ashamed of the bright eagerness of pampered life in the presence of the dim eyes and tear-stained cheeks of misery. His whole scheme changed. "I will go to the capital," he said, "quietly and modestly. I will not present myself in that gay place as the rich man, coming to enjoy, but as the thoughtful man, going to examine and to consider. I will not, indeed, conceal myself; but I will retire rather than advance, till I have good cause to do so. I will seek to find friends rather than to make acquaintances, and rather than simply endeavour to spend my income, I will endeavour to spend it well."

Nothing occurred to check the spirit of the soul, and he continued in the same mood till the stage-coach passed by the gates of his park, the next day. A number of passengers covered the outside of the vehicle, so that there was no room for him in that part which Englishmen always choose in preference to the interior, as if they loved the dust of summer, the rain of autumn and spring, and the cold winds of winter, better than any other of the enjoyments of those seasons. To foreigners this seems an ex-

traordinary taste; but the origin of it probably is that the Englishman, who pushes almost all his affections to extravagance, loves, with a vehemence that few other people can feel, the free air of heaven. Morley would willingly have changed places with the poorest traveller on the outside of the coach; but as that could not be done, he took his seat in solitude in the interior, where he found plenty of room for thought, there being nobody within it but himself.

The coach rolled on with a celerity which no one who has not travelled in one of those small, inconvenient, but wonderfully rapid, vehicles, can imagine to be produced by any animal under the sun. The nearer objects flew past like lightning, the further ones kept gradually changing their place with a quickness proportioned to their respective distances from the coach, which, for its part, like the mind of a vain man, seemed the centre of a circle round which all other objects were running; and Morley's impetuosity was well nigh satisfied with the rate of progression at which they were going.

After all, movement is the grand principle of animal life; it runs in our veins, it beats in our hearts, it advances with our ideas, it enters into every change, is more rapid in youth, slower in

infancy and age, fails as desires are extinguished or objects wanting, grows dull in sickness, pauses in sleep, and ends alone in death.

After driving on at the same pace for three-quarters of an hour, during which, Morley gave himself up to the sort of dreamy pleasure which I have mentioned, of feeling himself whirled on through a thousand beautiful objects, the coach stopped to change horses, and one of the travellers from the outside came in, and took his seat by the previously solitary tenant of the interior.

"It is as hot as if it were summer on the outside," he said, addressing nobody, "and the seat I had got was so unpleasant, that I am not sorry to quit it."

Morley did not answer; but—with the sort of habitual coldness which affects almost all Englishmen, in part pride, in part timidity, in part contempt for all other beings than themselves, in part fear that others should entertain the same contempt for them — he sat silent, gazing out of the window, following his own meditations, and quite willing that his travelling companion should follow his likewise.

The personage who had entered was not one, however, that had anything repulsive in his manners or appearance. He was tall, gracefully

formed, with an air of distinction, and a countenance often full of fire and animation, although the habitual expression was that of quick but easy-flowing thought. His brow was high and fine, his eyes peculiarly large and bright, and his hair strongly curled; the only feature in his face which could be termed even not good, was the mouth, the lips being somewhat thick and heavy. His complexion was dark, and the skin very brown, apparently with exposure to the air and sun, but the whole exterior was extremely pleasing; and had Morley looked at him at all, he would in all probability have spoken in return; but the young gentleman did not look at him, and the stranger, after pausing for a moment, spoke again—resolved, it would seem, to make some impression upon his temporary companion.

"Pray whose house is that?" he demanded, pointing to a handsome mansion on the right.

"I do not know," replied Morley, turning round, and gazing at him, for the first time.

"Indeed!" said the stranger; "I thought you were well acquainted with this country. The coachman told me that you were Sir Something Ernstein, and that the park, at the gates of which we took you up, belongs to you."

Morley smiled. "It is all very true," he

answered; "but, nevertheless, I do not know. I have not been in this part of England for six or seven years."

The stranger mused; but between two men not absolutely repulsive in themselves, nor particularly disposed by any circumstances mutually to repel each other—the poles of whose minds, in short, are not reversed—conversation soon establishes itself after a few words have been spoken. A single syllable will often do the whole with people whose characters are well balanced, and a word act like the hair trigger of a pistol, upon which hangs the fate of a life.

Oh, how strange and complicated is the web of God's will! How the smallest, the most pitiful, the most empty of things, by his great and wise volition, act their part in mighty changes! How a look, a tone, a sound, a pebble in our path, a grain of dust in our eyes, a headache, a fit of gloom, a caprice, a desire, may not only change the whole current of one man's existence, but affect the being of states and empires, and alter human destinies to the end of time! The present state of France, the whole mass of facts, circumstances, incidents, accidents, and events, which are there going on, may all

be owing to a lady, whom I knew well, having splashed her stocking fifty years ago.

"As how, in the name of Heaven?" demands the reader.

Thus! She was going out of her house with a relation in the town of Douai, when, carelessly putting her foot on a stone, she splashed her stocking. She went back to change it; the delay occupied a quarter of an hour. When she went on again, she met, at the corner of the *Place*, a man, since too famous in history, then scarcely known as anything but a clever fop. His name was Francis Maximilian Robespierre. Instead of going on, he turned with her and her relation, and walked up and down the *Place* with them for half an hour. In one of the houses hard by, a debating society was in the act of canvassing some political question. As they passed to and fro, Robespierre listened at the door from time to time, and at length, pronouncing the debaters to be all fools together, he rushed in to set them right. From that moment, he entered vehemently into all the fiery discussions which preceded the revolution, in which he had never taken part before, and grasped at power, which opened the doors of the cage, and let out the tiger in his heart. Thus, had the lady not

splashed her stocking, she would not have met the future tyrant; he would have pursued his way, and would not have turned back to the *Place;* he would never have heard the debate that first called him into action, for he was going to quit Douai the next day, and who can say how that one fact, in the infinite number of its combinations with other things, might have affected the whole social world at present?

The stranger mused, as we have said, but after a moment's thought, he replied, in a meditative tone—

"How strange is the sensation when, after a long absence from any place, we return to it suddenly! How different everything appears! —how shrunk, and changed, and withered, seem many objects that we thought beautiful and bright!—how many a light gone out!—how many a sweet sound silent! I believe that it is very happy for us that in point of time we cannot go back again, as we can in space."

"Nay, I do not think so," answered Morley, growing interested in his companion's conversation; "I cannot, indeed, judge from experience, but I should imagine that many an old man would willingly return to the days of his youth; that every man, indeed, when he finds

life beginning to lose its energies, health failing, the muscle relaxing, the eye growing dim, the limbs feeble, would willingly go back to the time when all were in their perfection."

"They would do so willingly, beyond all doubt," replied his companion; "but whether they would do so wisely is another thing. We all wish to see again the scenes of our boyhood, when we have been separated from them long; but when we are gratified, we are always disappointed."

Morley smiled, to find the stranger speaking to all his late sensations, as if he would have divined them; but he only enquired—

"Always?"

"Always, I think," said the other; "because it is in the nature of things that it should be so. Enjoyment is a harmony—the person that is pleased with anything and the object of his pleasure must be adapted to each other. Thus the boy loves a particular scene of his youth, returns to it as a man, and does not find the same delight; not because it is changed, but because it has remained the same, and he is altered; he has lost his fitness for it. It suited the boy; but it no more suits the man than would the wooden sword and the rocking horse."

"I do not know," replied Morley, "but I should think that the memory of enjoyment would make up for the change in his own nature. Memory is the hope of the past, and both brighten the objects that they rest upon."

"True!" answered his companion; "but then that which he enjoys is not the same, but the memory of his own pleasure therein. Oh no! the life of man is still, forward—forward! Each period of existence, doubtless, has its powers and its joys, as well as its hopes and its desires."

"But I have heard many that I have loved and respected, declare," said Morley, "that in their own case the pure joys of youth were those, on which memory had rested through life with the greatest satisfaction."

"Simply because they were the furthest off," replied the other; "but why call them the pure joys of youth? I do not see why they should be purer than those of any other period. Surely all joys are pure—I mean those that are not criminal. Anything that gives me pleasure, or by which I can give others pleasure, and which injures no one, is just as pure as the gathering of a flower, or the pruning of a tree—certainly more pure than crucifying a worm upon a hook, or shooting an inoffensive bird,

or many another of those sports and pastimes of which youth is fond."

Morley was silent for some little time; he felt that there was something dangerous in his companion's doctrines, if pushed to the extreme; but still, as far as he had expressed them, there was nothing of which he could take hold. The other seemed to perceive, with fine tact, that the young man who sat beside him, had taken alarm at the indefinite nature of his argument, and he added in haste—

"You will understand that I mean strictly to limit enjoyment to that which is not criminal—which is not wrong—in short, all I mean to say is, that the wisest plan for man to pursue is, to go on without ever turning back his eyes to the past; to enjoy all that is natural for his period of life, without regretting others that are gone. Each pleasure is as a precious stone, picked up upon the sea-shore, a thing to be treasured by memory; but because we find an emerald at one moment, that is no reason why we should neglect the diamond that we find the next, or the ruby that comes a little further on. Our capabilities of enjoyment were intended to be used, and he who does not do so, fails to fulfil one of the great obligations of his nature."

Morley was better satisfied, but still not completely so; and had he been older and more experienced, he might have thought that his conversation with his travelling companion, is like that which Conscience and Desire sometimes hold together, when temptation is very strong. Desire still finds an argument to lead us up to the very verge of wrong, assuring Conscience all the time that we are upon the safe ground of right, and trusting to some momentary impulse to make us leap the barrier when we have reached it.

Morley, however, was too young, too inexperienced, and be it added, too innocent even in heart, to have had many such debates with conscience, and to be experimentally acquainted with the tactics of temptation. There was certainly something in his companion's arguments which did not satisfy, but at the same time there was a peculiar charm in his manner, in his conversation, in his very look, which made words that might otherwise have failed to produce any effect, now sink into the mind, and remain, like seeds, to produce fruit at a future period.

The manner and the look that we have just spoken of, were certainly very fascinating apart,

but still more so together; not so much because they harmonized as because they differed. The manner was gentle, soft, and though full of rapid thought, yet easy, and glowing with a sort of conviction that made assent easy; and yet there was nothing in the least presumptuous in it. On the contrary indeed, every word appeared to be spoken, more as a suggestion than a decision; while the soft richness of the speaker's voice seemed calculated to persuade and lead. The look on the other hand was full of quick vivacity and fire—the eye brightened up at a word, the lip changed its expression twenty times in a minute, and withal there was an air of reckless joyousness, of rapid careless quickness, which contrasted wonderfully with the metaphysical themes he touched upon, and by contrast, gave the stronger effect to his deeper thoughts.

That he was a man of station and high breeding one would scarcely doubt; and in his dress there was that scrupulous neatness which is one of the distinguishing marks of a gentleman in youth. In older life, a man may well lose a part of that attention to his apparel which no young man should be without; but before the grand passage of forty-five, no one should

deem himself old enough to go out in a bad hat if he can get a good one, or wear ill-blacked boots. The neatness of his dress did not at all approach to puppyism, but every article of his clothing was so well adapted to the other, that the whole harmonized perfectly, and gave that peculiar and undefinable tone to his appearance which has a vague sort of connexion with the mind within, a reflection perhaps we might call it, of the habitual thoughts and feelings influencing the dress without the wearer knowing it. Man is but a species of chameleon, in general taking all his tints from the things that surround him; but when these fail—like the stalk of the balsam plant—his external colouring is affected by that which passes within; and a man's fondness for particular hues, or sounds, or scents, is often no bad indication of the character of his mind.

Morley Ernstein felt not a little impressed in favour of the stranger. He was, indeed, not without strong good sense himself, but still there was a charm that he could not resist; and never dreaming that he was doing aught but passing agreeably an hour which might otherwise have proved tedious, he soon renewed the conversation, but on a different subject.

Let no one, however, venture to think that even a brief half-hour's conversation with another man of strong mind can be a matter of mere indifference—indeed, I know not that it ever is so, with any one, wise or foolish, ugly or pretty, good or bad. We are all nothing but traders in this world, mere hucksters, travelling packmen, with a stock continually changing, increasing, diminishing. We go forth into the world carrying a little wallet of ideas and feelings; and with every one to whom we speak for a moment, we are trafficking in those commodities. If we meet with a man of wisdom and of virtue, sometimes he is liberal, and supplies us largely with high and noble thoughts, receiving only in return sweet feelings of inward satisfaction; sometimes, on the other hand, he will only trade upon equal terms, and if we cannot give him wisdom for wisdom, shuts up his churlish shop and will deal with us no more. If we go to a bad man we are almost always sure to be cheated in our traffic, to get evil or useless wares, and often those corrupted things which, once admitted to our stock, spread the mould and mildew to all around. Often, often, too, in our commerce with others do we pay for the poisons which we buy as antidotes, all that we possess of

good, both in feeling and idea. But when we sit down by beauty, and gentleness, and virtue, what a world of sweet images do we gain for the little that we can give in exchange! Ay, and even in passing a few light moments with a dear, innocent child, how much of bright and pure do we carry away in sensation!—how much of deep and high may we gain in thought! Oh no!—it is no indifferent thing, with whom we converse, if ideas be the riches of the spirit.

Thoughtful men, and men of rapid combinations, are almost always abrupt in conversation. A topic is started, two of them pursue it like hunters for some time together, mutually hallooing on one another; but the time comes when they separate, ride rapidly on alone, till they have run down the game, and then they come back to rouse a new quarry. Thus Morley Ernstein had soon got far away from the subject of their former discourse; and had followed the thoughts suggested by it to an end, with many a collateral idea likewise, before he spoke again. When he did so, it was merely of an object that attracted the corporeal eye.

"What a beautiful sunset!" he said, gazing out of the window of the coach towards a spot where, through a break in the large wood by

which they were passing, the last rays of day were streaming in floods of gold and crimson, seeming to make the forest air thick and misty with light—"What a beautiful sunset! Might not one imagine the glades of that wood filled at this moment with every sort of fairy and fanciful being, to which the curious superstitions of old times gave birth?"

"One might, indeed!" replied the stranger. "It is a haunt formed expressly for the 'good people,' as you call them, in this country. Here the belief in such beings is very nearly extinct, even in the lowest classes. In my country, such is by no means the case, and there is scarcely one of us, whatever be his grade, in whose bosom, if you were able to search into all its hidden corners, you would not find some belief—ay, and a strong belief, too—not only in the existence of spirits, but in their assuming tangible forms and opening a communication with man."

"Are you not an Englishman, then?" demanded Morley, with so much astonishment in his countenance at the discovery that one who spoke his own difficult tongue so well was from another country, as to call up a smile upon the lip of his companion—"Are you not an Englishman, then?"

"No!" replied the stranger; "I am not; but some foreigners can speak your language tolerably, especially when they have lived long in the land. But, as I was saying, there are very few persons in Germany who are totally free from such a belief; and, indeed, it is scarcely reasonable to suppose, if we admit there is another order of created beings above ourselves, that there should be no means whatever of communication between the two next links in the same great chain. I confess, that I cannot conceive such a thing possible. If there be such things as spirits—if all be not merely material in this moving clay, there must be some means by which the superhuman being can make his presence felt and known to his fellow spirit in the earthly tabernacle. All our great men have certainly believed such to be the case. Who can read either Goëthe or Schiller, without perceiving that creed peeping through philosophy, and wit, and history, and poetry?"

"Oh, Goëthe certainly entertained such feelings!" replied Morley. "It was impossible for any one so to extract intense sublimity from human superstitions, without being tinctured with them strongly himself. Had Goëthe written whole volumes to prove that everything is

material, a few lines of the choruses in Faust would have shewn him to be insincere."

"The picture of Mephistophiles himself," said his companion, "were surely quite enough."

"Yes," replied Morley; "and yet there are parts of the character of Mephistophiles which I do not clearly understand. He is all-powerful over Faust, and yet seems subservient to him. He appears at his command, obeys his behests, and yet leads, directs, and overpowers him."

"In short," replied his companion, "he serves but to command; and, depend upon it, whether it be an allegory or a portrait, the picture is a true one. It may be, that the great poet meant to represent the power of the passions. But I imagine that he drew, almost by inspiration, the likeness of that mighty being, whose fate and character have been summed up by Milton, in the words—

"Evil, be thou my good!"

You must remember, that the infinite variety of that being is as wonderful as his power. Milton might draw one portrait; Goëthe another: both different, but both alike. If Goëthe really meant a picture rather than an allegory, he shewed that Mephistophiles had bound him-

self simply to serve, for a certain time, the views of a vast mind which otherwise might have escaped him. He ruled Faust by his wisdom, governed, directed him—ay, even enlightened him; but the spirit adapted himself to the mortal with whom he had to deal. Even by the very tone of sadness that pervades the character of Mephistophiles, the gravity that is in his mirth, the depth that is below his lightness, he was fitted to deal with Faust. Had the character of the man been different, so would have been the character of the spirit. The Magician had power over the finer essence for the time, and the prince of one class of spirits willingly devoted himself to the service and instruction of a mortal—nay, more, it is evident, as far as he could feel affection or pity for a being so placed as Faust, he felt it for him."

"But," exclaimed Morley, "do you imagine Satan to be capable of affection and pity?"

"Why not?" demanded his companion—"more, in all probability, than beings that have never known sorrow or pain."

"You seem inclined to defend the Prince of Darkness," rejoined Morley, with a smile.

"Certainly!" answered his companion, laughing—"if I did not defend him, no one else

would; and I am always inclined to take part with the weaker side."

Almost as the stranger spoke, the coach, which had been going down a long hill with terrible rapidity, swayed from side to side for a moment, like a ship in a stormy sea. A violent concussion then took place as the vehicle, in turning the corner of a bridge, struck a large stone, and the next instant Morley felt that the carriage was going over towards the side on which he sat. He had but time by one hasty glance to see that the low parapet of the bridge was close to the wheels, when the stage went over; the stones gave way beneath it, and the whole mass rolled headlong into the river below. It fell upon the top, and struck the stones in the bed of the stream. The concussion was terrible—the carriage was nearly dashed to pieces, and Morley Ernstein only felt one violent blow, only saw a thousand bright sparks flash from his own eyes, and then lost all consciousness, even that of pain.

CHAPTER IV.

THE sensations of Morley Ernstein, when he returned to consciousness, were all of the most unpleasant kind. There was a numbness over his whole body, and a feeling of tingling from head to foot, which, to those who have not felt it, may be difficult, if not impossible to describe. A violent weighty pain in the head too, a sluggish oppression at the heart, and a great difficulty in drawing the breath, all made the consciousness of life so burdensome, that, when he saw a number of people standing round the bed in which he had been placed, and employing every means that art could devise and skill execute, to restore him entirely to life, he could not but feel a desire that they would let him alone, and leave him to that quiet insensibility

from which they were taking such pains to rouse him. For the moment it seemed to him that death was a very pleasant thing; and he who, full of health, life, and buoyant youth, had thought half an hour before that there would be nothing more awful than to lie "in cold obstruction and to rot," now that he had become more familiar with "the lean, abhorred monster," felt not the same repugnance, and almost longed for the still quiet of the grave. Life and death are the two grand adversaries; fighting incessantly for the kingdom of man's body, and in proportion as the dominion of Life in us is powerful, so is our reluctance to yield ourselves to her enemy.

Such as I have mentioned were the first feelings of Morley Ernstein; but, as life came back more fully—as he felt his heart beat more freely, his benumbed frame regain its true sensations, his bosom heave with the unrestrained breath—his love for the bright angel, and his abhorrence for her dark opponent, returned in full force; and he could feel grateful to those who were giving him back to all the warm associations of earthly being. His eyes wandered round the little circle that encompassed his bed; but all the faces were strange, except

one—that of his travelling companion in the stage-coach; who, amongst the most eager, and the most busy, was superintending with active skill the execution of every mandate pronounced by the lips of a tall, thin, yellow-faced man in black, that sat by the side of the bed near the head. All eyes were fixed upon the patient, with a look of interest in his fate and satisfaction at the change that was coming over him; but the moment he attempted to speak, every one raised a finger to the lip, in order to impose silence upon him.

"You may take away the salt from under the shoulders," said the thin yellow man; "circulation is coming back rapidly. Keep the hot water to the feet, however, and bring me a little Madeira, Mr. Jones. We must give it him by teaspoonfuls. Your friend, sir, will do," he continued, speaking to Morley's travelling companion; "but we must be very careful!—very careful, indeed! I knew a poor fellow once, who died, when every one thought him quite recovered, merely from the people imprudently raising him up in bed.—Pray do not move a muscle, sir!" he added, seeing that the young gentleman himself was evidently listening to all he said. "You have had a very narrow

escape, sir—a very narrow escape, indeed; and the least thing may undo all we have done. I never knew, in my life, a case of suspended animation, where a relapse did not prove fatal. —Oh, the Madeira!—now, sir—a teaspoonful every five minutes!"

From all that Morley Ernstein saw and heard, he judged rightly that he had undergone, and perhaps required, the treatment applied to persons who are apparently drowned. He learned, moreover, in the course of thee vening, that, at the moment that he had received the severe blow on the head, which had deprived him of sensation, the carriage had sunk deep in the water, and that he would have infallibly perished had it not been for the exertions of his fellow-traveller, who, not being stunned as he was, had soon perceived that he remained under the water, and had dragged him out, through the door of the broken vehicle. He was quite insensible, however, when brought to land, and remained so for nearly an hour, although every means of resuscitation were skilfully employed.

The dangers of our poor friend were not by any means over when life once more bounded freely in his bosom. The headache which he had felt, on first recovering his senses, increased

every minute; and ere the next morning, violent fever and delirium had succeeded. For ten days he hung between life and death; but the thin yellow man, whom he had seen sitting by his bedside, was, in truth, a surgeon of great skill; and the unwearied care and attention of his fellow-traveller, whose whole interest in him was only that which could be excited by the companionship of a few short hours, did as much as art to withdraw him from this new danger.

When the young gentleman recovered sufficiently to comprehend what was passing around him, he found another face by his bedside, better known than that of any one near. His old servant, Adam Gray, had been brought, it seemed, from the mansion to attend upon his young master, at a period when very little hope was entertained of his recovery, and for the four last days he had been employed in aiding the stranger in his care of the patient.

Every writer who has ever taken a pen in hand has written, and every heart, even the most selfish, has felt, how sweet is the sight of a familiar face in times of sorrow, sickness, or difficulty; so that the observation is trite enough, and yet few have analyzed the sensations which that

familiar face produces, or told us why we love to see it better than fairer countenances, or even those that express as great an interest in us. It is that a familiar face comes loaded with those sweet associations of other times, which are no mean medicaments to the body or the mind. There is a light of hope upon it, reflected from those past days, which seems to brighten all the dark spots in the present; and such was the sight of that old man's countenance to Morley Ernstein. It brought to him the recollections of his early years, a feeling of balmy spring, the thoughts of health and rural sports, and many bright hours long gone; and from the moment that he saw him hovering round his sick bed, the sensation of convalescence came upon him, and he could say to himself, "I am getting well."

Ere long, conversation was allowed him, and he soon found the opportunity of doing that which he had more than once wished to do, while the grave doctor and the officious nurse had continued to impose silence upon him—namely, to thank the man, who, on so slight an acquaintance, had tended him with the care and kindness of a brother. His travelling companion, who had been absent for about an hour,

entered the room, shortly after the permission to speak was granted him, and took his seat by the bedside in which he now sat up, while the balmy air of the first days of June found their way in through the open window of the little inn. Morley lost not the occasion, and expressed, as he well could do, in the fine eloquent language of the heart, the feelings of gratitude, which he experienced for all the generous kindness that had been shewn him.

"Mention it not!—mention it not!" replied the stranger; "I have no title to thanks whatsoever; I did it for my own gratification, solely and simply, and consequently have no right to claim or to receive gratitude."

"Nay, nay," said Morley, "I have heard of such disclaimers before, my good friend, and know that some men always put good actions upon selfish motives, when they perform them themselves. But the way I distinguish is, to ask whether, abstracted from the pleasure of doing good, this man or that, who denies the merit of all he has done, would have so acted. This man jumps into a river, to save a child from drowning; that visits a prison, to give comfort to a sick man—would the one have plunged into the water with his clothes

on merely for amusement, or the other have spent an hour in the prison if no sick man had been there? If the pleasure felt be derived solely from the goodness of the action, the man who experiences it is a good man, and well deserving the gratitude and admiration of his fellows. You saved my life, the landlord informs me, by dragging me out of the carriage while it was under water, and——"

"Yes, that is true," replied his companion, half laughing; "I did, indeed, as Sheridan called it, play the Newfoundland dog, when I found you were likely to be drowned unless assisted; but that is all, and surely that is little enough. I have done the same for a fly in a cream jug."

"But you have never stayed three weeks in a country inn," answered Morley, smiling, "to nurse a fly in a fever; and for that, at least, you deserve my deepest gratitude."

"Not at all!" answered his friend—"not at all! Even on your own principles, you owe me no thanks. I never thought whether I was doing a good action or not. In regard to the first of your mighty obligations, that of staying three weeks in a country inn, it might truly have been a great tax upon me under some circumstances; but just at that time, I had nothing on

earth to do. I was going back to London out of pure weariness of the place I was in; for in general, I never am in town before the first or second of June. Here I have had fine air, fine scenery, and a fine trout-stream. What would you have more? Then as to watching and taking care of you in your delirium, I have no merit there: the truth is, I am fond of all strong emotions, and the watching you, the wondering whether you would live or die, the changes of your countenance, the gray shade that would sometimes come over your face, the flush of fever, the restless tossing to and fro—and then, again, the gambling, as it were, each moment in my own mind for your life—all this was surely excitement enough. Besides your delirium was worth any money. There is something so strange and fantastic in the ravings of a man in fever—very much more curious and metaphysical than mere madness. In madness, one always finds one strong predominant idea; but in delirium it is as if all the ideas of a lifetime were mixed in one wild chaos. Not Talma, nor Schroeder, nor Malibran, could have afforded me so much interest as you in your delirium."

"You have a strange taste," replied Ernstein, not altogether well pleased, in the first instance,

at the explanation of his companion's feelings. A moment's reflection, however, convinced him that there was some affectation in the account, but that the affectation was of that generous kind which seeks to diminish the value of an obligation conferred upon another, even at the risk of appearing hard or selfish. "Well," he continued, "your motives are your own affairs; but the kindness you have shewn me is mine, and I must feel gratitude accordingly."

While they were still speaking, the surgeon again entered, and his appearance put a stop to the conversation for the night. On the following morning, however, the patient was so far better as to be permitted to rise for a short time, and his fellow-traveller visited him towards the middle of the day, announcing that he came to bid him farewell, as he had just received letters which summoned him to London. "I do not go unwillingly," he continued, "for my plan of life is ever to hasten forward. Existence is so short that we have no time for long pauses anywhere; each joy of each period — each thought, each feeling of each period of animal being should be tasted, or they will be lost, for we must never forget the great axiom, that every minute we are a minute older."

"But do you not think," said Morley, "that we may sometimes, in our haste, taste a bitter instead of a sweet?"

"So much the better—so much the better," replied his friend, laughing; "it is by such things that we become wise. I am quite of the opinion of your great poet, Coleridge, that—

> "The strongest plume in Wisdom's wing
> Is memory of past folly;"

and depend upon it every man will find in life, that to be very wise, he must be a little foolish. The child that does not cut its finger before it is eight years old, will cut its hand by the time it is twelve, and perhaps its throat by the time it is twenty. What I mean is—for I see you are surprised—that we must learn what is evil or dangerous, by that acquaintance with evil and danger which is fitted for our time of life, otherwise we are sure to get our portion all at once, at some after period. It is like one of those medicines which doctors tell us accumulate in the system, and kill us suddenly when we least expect it; or rather, like one of those Eastern drugs, which are very salutary when we take a little of them every day, but utterly poisonous if we take a large dose at once."

"Might it not be better for a healthy person to take none at all?" demanded Morley; and added, the moment after, seeing his companion about to reply, "but I am not fit to argue to-day, though I think that your system has some flaws in it."

"Doubtless—doubtless," replied the other. "It would not be a human system if it had not. Heaven forbid that I should originate a perfect system of any kind! I would not commit such a crime for the world. I will only answer your question, therefore, by saying, that if we were on this earth in a healthy state, as your words suppose, it would certainly be very foolish to take drugs of any kind; but depend upon it a portion of physic, and a portion of evil, are reserved for every man to take, to suffer, to commit, and he had better spread them over as wide a space as possible, that they may not be too thick anywhere. And now I must leave you, for the coach will soon pass."

"But," said Morley, eagerly, "I must ask you first, to tell me where I can find you in London, for you will let me hope that an acquaintance begun under such unusual circumstances is not to end here, and as yet I do not even know your name."

"It is not Mephistophiles!" replied the other, who had marked with a keen eye the expression of his young companion's countenance, at every doctrine which might be considered as doubtful in tendency, and had smiled, moreover, at what he considered the boyish innocence of Morley Ernstein—"it is not Mephistophiles! I am a very inferior devil, I assure you. My name is Everard Lieberg. In England, which is as much my home as Germany, people put Esquire at the end of it. On the other side of the channel, I put Graff before it, and the one title signifies about as little as the other."

"But tell me, Count, where I am to find you?" demanded Morley, the other having risen to depart.

"Nay, do not call me Count!" exclaimed Lieberg, laughing; "if you do, I shall fancy myself walking about London, with mustachios and a queer-looking coat, and lodging somewhere near Leicester Square. No, no, I put off the Count here, and I have a bachelor's lodging in Sackville Street, where I shall be very happy to see you—so farewell."

Morley Ernstein was left alone, and, as usual with the young, his first thoughts were of the

character of his late companion. Before we grow old, we learn that the character of nineteen men out of twenty is not worth a thought. There was something in Lieberg that did not altogether please him—not alone displayed in his opinions, but also in his manner, a lightness which was superficial—not affected, but habitual—and which covered the depths of his character with an impenetrable disguise. It was like a domino, which, though nothing but thin, fluttering silk, hides form and feature, so that the real person beneath cannot be recognised, even by a near friend.

"Has he any heart, I wonder?" thought the young gentleman. "If so, he takes pains to hide it. All things seem to pass him by, affecting him but as breath upon a looking-glass, leaving no trace the moment after, upon the cold, hard surface beneath. Here he has nursed me like a brother for the last fortnight, and now he leaves me with the same air of indifference as if we had just got out of a stage-coach in which our acquaintance had commenced two hours before."

Morley felt as if he were somewhat ungrateful for scanning so closely the character of one who had treated him with much kindness, and, soon quitting such thoughts, he rang for his good old

servant, Adam Gray, and enquired into all that had passed at Morley Court since he had left it —the situation of the poor cottagers, whose fate he had endeavoured to soften; the health of his horses and his dogs; the promises of the game season; and all those things that the most interest a very young Englishman, in his hours of health. The horses were all well; the dogs were in as good a state as could be wished; the game bade fair to be abundant.

"But as to Johnes, and Dickenson, and poor Widow Harvey," the old man said, "I can tell you very little, sir. They have had the money, and the bread and soup; and Johnes had work at the Lee farm. Widow Harvey got wool given her to spin, and I sent the apothecary to Dickenson, but did not hear how he was; for you see, sir, I was just going down to look in at the poor fellow's cottage, when Miss Carr came to tell me of the accident, and—"

"Miss who?" demanded Morley Ernstein, in some surprise.

"Oh, Miss Carr, sir, you know!" replied Adam Gray. "She was in a great flurry, poor young lady, and did seem to be very sorry about you—indeed every one knows she has a good

heart, and does as much for the poor as she can, though that's less than she likes, poor young lady!"

"And, pray, who is Miss Carr?" demanded Ernstein; "and why does your compassion run over on her account, my good Adam? Why do you call her 'poor young lady' so often?"

"Oh, because she has such a father, to be sure, sir!" replied the servant. "Surely you re collect Old Carr, the miser, and his daughter, Miss Juliet—a beautiful girl she was—and is, too, for that matter, poor thing!"

"I do not recollect anything about them," answered Morley; "and yet I remember everything for many years before my poor mother died. But no such name as Carr ever comes back to my memory. Who is this Mr. Carr?"

"Ay, ay, I recollect," answered the old man, "it was long ago—before your time. But as to this Mr. Carr—he's a miser, and was a lawyer—ay, and cheat into the bargain, if all tales be true. However, sir, he's got money enough, they say, to buy out half the county; and there he lives, in that old tumble-down house, at the back of Yelverly, and not a shilling will he spend to repair it. He has two maids now, but till Miss Juliet was grown up, there was but one;

and then the man that does the garden and looks after the farm, takes care of the two horses. Miss Juliet, they say, has some money of her own, but she spends all that upon the poor people about Yelverly, and upon books."

Morley mused; there was a feeling in his bosom—not an operation of the mind, but one of the revelations of the heart—which instantly convinced him that the lady, whose horse he had contrived to frighten, was no other than Juliet Carr. How she had discovered his situation, so as to give notice to his servants, and send one of them to him, was his first thought; but, before he gratified his curiosity on that subject, by asking any questions, he returned to something which had attracted his attention a few minutes before, demanding—

"What was it you meant just now, Adam, when you said, '*It* was long ago, before my time?'"

"Oh, the quarrel, sir," replied the old man—"the quarrel between your father and Lawyer Carr; when he came about something, and vowed he would prosecute Sir Henry for defamation, as they called it, which means scandal, I take it; and your father struck him, and turned him out of the house, and he has never been near the place since."

"Did you hear how Miss Carr knew that I was ill?" demanded Morley, now fully convinced that his supposition was right.

"She told me they had been passing by this place, sir," answered Adam Gray, "and they heard the whole story from the ostlers; so she walked over, that very night, to tell us, poor young lady! It's a long walk, too, from Yelverly; so she was tired, and sat down for a minute or two in the library, and took up the book that was open upon the table—it was called 'Herrick's Poems,' I think—and asked if you had been reading it; and said, she hoped that you would soon be able to read it again, with such a sweet voice, she made us all love her. I do wonder how that man happened to have such a daughter as that—her mother was a good lady, too."

"Well, that will do, Adam!" said his master; "now bring me some soup."

CHAPTER V.

THE next day Morley Ernstein was permitted by his doctor to go out, and strange, most strange, were the feelings with which he did so. —There is nothing positive on earth but truth; all other matters are relative. Truth, indeed—pure abstract truth—is the starting point of all morals, and without it we should have no starting point at all; so that the world might well be Pyrrhonists or Epicureans, or what they would, were it not for the simple doctrine that two and two make four, and the consequences thereof; for, once having established that truth is right and falsehood wrong, every other moral tenet follows step by step, as a matter of course. That ethics are as much a certain science, when rightly pursued and understood, as mathematics,

I have no more doubt than of my own existence, ethics being, in fact, the mathematics of the spirit.

But nevertheless, to return from our digression, it is wonderful how many things on this earth are relative, which we fancy to be quite positive; amongst the rest, every kind of sensation, every kind of pleasure, every kind of taste; so that it is quite easy for us, from our own occasional experience, to conceive how, in another state of being, when we have shuffled off this mortal coil, and cast away the fibres of the flesh, many of those things that gave us pleasure here below, will be abhorrent to us, and much that might seem dull, heavy, incomprehensible to the animal walking in darkness on the earth, will then, brightened by higher perceptions, be all light, and glory, and enjoyment.

With Morley Ernstein, however, as with all convalescents, the sensations were not exactly changed from what they were before; some were acuminated, some were softened, since he had lain on thebed of sickness, and strange indeed were his feelings as he walked out, leaning on the arm of his old servant. It was only into the little garden at the back of the inn that he ven-

tured, but it was all delight to him. Nature seemed never to have been so bright and beautiful; the broad bosom of each common rose that was planted by the side of the gravel walk appeared a chamber of enjoyment, in which some small angel might well pass away the perfumed hours. The cobweb, spangled with morning dew, was a miracle; the breath of the breeze was heaven. There was withal a sensation of calm, peaceful repose within his own breast, which was very different from the eager fire of his nature in ordinary health; and during that day, and the one that followed it, he contemplated with pleasure a return to Morley Court, to a long lapse of dreamy hours amongst woods, and fields, and streams, with, perhaps, some thoughts of finding out fair Juliet Carr, and thanking her for the interest she had taken in him.

Day by day, however, health came back, and strength along with it, and eager activity with strength. The longing for objects on which to spend the energies within him; the curiosity of a young fresh heart for a knowledge of the deeper and more powerful things of life; that ambition for the vigorous occupations of mature minds, which possesses all who set out in life with strong bodily and intellectual faculties,

returned upon the young Baronet with every pulse of renewed health; and four days after his first walk in the garden, he despatched Adam Gray for the chariot from Morley Court, and on the sixth was rolling away towards London.

London is certainly the most wonderful city in the world, and probably the most unlike any other on the earth. On approaching it, one is lost in surprise from its immensity of extent—an immensity that makes itself felt one hardly knows how. It seems to press upon you before you reach it; to multiply its forms and appearances around you, when you fancy yourself far from it; to surround, to grasp, to overwhelm you, ere you know that a city is near. Nevertheless, when once in it, the effect upon any one who is not an indigenous plant of the soil, is anything but impressive. In general, the smallness of the houses, the long rows of iron railings, the littleness of the windows, and their numbers, give the streets a petty and poor effect; while the colour of the bricks, which, when seen in grand masses, is imposing enough, has there a dull and dirty appearance, very unsatisfactory to the eye. Add to all this, the thick and heavy atmosphere, foul with the steam of fifteen hundred thousand human

beings, and full three hundred thousand fires, so that a vast dome of smoke nightcaps the great capital, and only suffers the sun to penetrate, as the dim vision of a brighter thing.

In summer, indeed, the extinction of all the fires—except those which man, the cooking animal, maintains everlastingly, for the gratification of his palate—leaves the English metropolis somewhat clearer and brighter than at any other season of the year; and as it was a warm and brilliant day, in the beginning of June, when Morley Ernstein entered London, the streets looked gay and cheerful, and he drove up to the Hotel in Berkeley-square, with that feeling of pleasant expectation which comes upon us all when we enter a new abode, where a thousand means and opportunities of pleasure, a thousand channels and highways of gratification, are opened before us, and where sorrow, and pain, and misery, and sickness, and death, are hidden beneath those pompous and glittering veils with which it is the business of society to conceal the abhorrent features of all that is distressing and frightful in human existence.

There are some people who, on entering a great capital, feel a weight, an oppressive load fall upon their bosom, as if all those miseries

of which we have spoken were infused into the burthensome atmosphere of the place, and were drawn in with every breath; but these must be men who have lived long, and known sorrows tangibly, who have felt the tooth of gnawing care, and the beak and talons of fierce anxiety, preying day by day upon the bleeding heart. Such, however, was not the case with Morley Ernstein; there seemed a well of hope in his bosom, the waters of which possessed a power ascribed to those consecrated by the Roman church, of driving out all dark spirits from the spot over which they were sprinkled. The busy life, the eager energy within him, the warrior-spirit of strong animal existence, always ready to combat the ills of fate, guarded the door of imagination, and suffered no thought of coming evil to intrude.

Thus all things seemed to smile around him; and although the lilacs and the laurels, the laburnums and the privets, which tenanted the square before his eyes, might look somewhat dull and smoky, when compared with the green trees of the country; though the air he breathed might seem but a shade thinner than pea-soup, and the noise of eternal carriages might strike his ear as something less tuneful than the

birds of his own fields; yet it was not upon these things that his mind rested. He thought, on the contrary, of all the wonders of that mighty place; of the vast resources comprised within it; of the intellectual pleasures that were there collected as if in a store-house; of the magnificent monuments of art that it contained; of the wealth, the abundance, the splendour, the beauty, the fancy, the genius, the wisdom, the grace, with which every street was thronged; of the vast and strange combinations that were there produced; of the laws, the systems, the philosophies, the wars, the colonies, the enterprises, that had thence issued forth; of the piety, the charity, the benevolence, the great aspirations, the noble purposes, the fine designs, the wonderful discoveries, which had there originated; and—as if to give the finishing touch of the sublime to all—came over his mind the vague, spectre-like image of the crime which there had a permanent existence, an unchangeable and undiscoverable home. Such were the feelings with which he viewed London, on returning to it as his own master, free to taste, to examine, to inquire, to judge, and to enjoy.

It would require more time than I could bestow on any one part of my subject, to trace the

life of Morley Ernstein during the first fortnight of his stay in London. With the eagerness of novelty he followed various pleasures, sought out various amusements, and dipped somewhat, but not deeply, in the stream of dissipation. What is called the season was that year protracted to a period later than usual. Gay carriages still thronged the streets in the end of June. The Parliament continued its sittings far into July, and gaiety succeeded gaiety, till those who had commenced the pleasures of a London life at the beginning of the year, with bright eyes and rosy cheeks, were pale and haggard, with the round of midnight parties and crowded rooms.

Not so Morley Ernstein: health and strength were returning to him every hour, in spite of the current in which he was now immersed, and by one of those strange physiological phenomena for which it is difficult, if not impossible to account, the vigour of his frame, the impetuosity of his animal nature seemed to be increased rather than diminished by the consequences of the malady which had nearly crushed out existence altogether.

The reader, perhaps, may think that the young Baronet shewed somewhat like weak caprice, e

still weaker vacillation of purpose, in plunging into the high tide of gaiety, when he had set out for London with the design of studying calmly and quietly his fellow-beings, and the strange complicated form of existence in which they moved in the great capital; but the difference between the execution and the design, as, indeed, is generally the case, was produced by the operation of external as well as internal causes, by the accidents of situation as well as the vehement impulse of high blood and energetic youth, contending against the calmer admonitions of a holier spirit within. On his first arrival in London, he followed the plan which he had proposed, and called upon no one but his guardian and Count Lieberg. He felt himself, indeed, bound in gratitude not to make any unnecessary delay in visiting either. The latter, with whom the reader is already acquainted, had saved his life; the former had protected his early years and had administered his fortune with anxious care and successful wisdom. He, however, not being yet known to the reader, we must bring him on the stage for a moment, and dwell briefly upon a character, which, though presenting no very salient points, is nevertheless worth

studying as the type of a class. Mr. Hamilton was a banker—an English banker, which is as different an animal from that which goes by the same generic name in other countries, as the mammoth or antediluvian elephant is from the elephant of the *Jardin des Plantes.* He was a calm, quiet, reasoning man, of aristocratical family, (his brother was a peer of the realm,) and of aristocratical habits and manners. He had been selected from among three younger brothers, to take a share in one of the great London banking-houses, on account of his talent for calculation and his habits of business; and during the course of a long career, he had shewn that knowledge of detail and attention to minutiæ which is the essence of accuracy in every sort of transaction. He possessed, however, another set of qualities which are but too rarely combined in this world with those which we have ascribed to him. His general views were broad and extensive; his heart benevolent and kind; and he valued not in any degree, except as a means, that gold with which he was called upon to occupy his thoughts during a considerable portion of every day in his life. There is many a reader who may, perhaps, say, "This character is unnatural—this

is one of those phantasms of ideal perfection only to be found in a romance; every one knows, that the habit of dealing with gold contracts the heart, and even if it does not diminish the intellect, it so concentrates it upon one favourite object, as to render it unavailable for all the grander purposes of life."

Thus, reasoning from abstract data, we may all produce very pleasant criticisms, as philosophers have often produced very pleasant theories, and yet be very wrong. The character of the banker is not an ideal one; and though I certainly do not intend to make him the hero of these pages, or to bring him often on the stage, I must proceed to paint him, and must add another touch, which will add to the incredibility of the whole. He was not ambitious any more than he was avaricious. He had a family of several children whom he loved passing well. His eldest daughter was the pride of his heart; she might have bound her brow with a coronet, or have seen herself mistress of the most splendid mansion in her native land. With her father's full consent and approbation, she married a man of no great wealth and no very high expectations, having for every recommendation that he was a gentleman both in heart and manners, and a gallant soldier of

a gallant race. This was not like ambition; and there are eyes which may sometime or another rest upon this page, who have witnessed those acts of generous liberality, which shew that wealth may be gained without begetting avarice, and that the most expansive liberality is perfectly compatible with the most clear and accurate knowledge of detail. Mr. Hamilton was a politician as well as a financier, but he carried the same spirit into all his proceedings, and displayed the clear and just views which spring from a high mind, combined with the noble and generous feelings which originate in a fine heart.

Such was the English Banker; it is certain that he might have some faults, that there might be an error here or a weakness there; but I envy not the man whose mental eye can gaze through the smoked glass of a misanthropical philosophy, to discover spots amid such light as that.

To the house of Mr. Hamilton, then, Morley Ernstein's very first visit was paid. He had always felt the deepest gratitude and regard towards his guardian, and he was now well pleased to express all such sensations at the end of that period, during which the one had

the right to control, and the other was bound to obey. Ere he left Mr. Hamilton, he told him the plan which he had laid out for himself in London, but the good banker did not altogether approve of it.

"You are wise," he said, "Morley, not to plunge deeply into what may be called innocent dissipations, but still the society of persons in your own rank is a necessary which you must not deny yourself, not a luxury which can enfeeble or injure the mind. Besides, my young friend, if you would study man and society, you must study both under their various aspects; nor must you look at them apart, for if you would judge sanely, you must see, each grade acting and reacting upon the other. The man of rank and station is but a mere automaton, pretty to look at, amusing to examine; it is not till he is considered in his relations with those around him and below him, in the reference which his acts bear to his inferiors, to his equals, and to his God, that you have the great moral agent, the most wonderful subject of contemplation which this world can furnish. Such, too, is the case with the inferior grades of society. All their acts, all their thoughts, all their pleasures, all their sufferings, become tenfold more

interesting, tenfold more important, as an object of meditation, when considered in reference to, and in comparison with, the pleasures and sufferings, thoughts and acts of others. Beware, my dear boy, beware, how, in your very outset of life, you gain a *one-sided* view of the grand scheme of society. It is this capital error which is the prevailing fault of politicians and philosophers. It is from this error that we have so many declaimers, and so few reasoners. It is this error which makes the staple commodity of those men, who are continually exciting one class of society against another. It is with this that they trade, and often win themselves most undeserved renown, of which future ages will strip them, and leave them naked and disgraced. It is this one-sided view which actuates the many good, and, in some respects, wise men, whom we see daily altering laws without mending them, and founding institutions without benefiting society. See, my dear Morley, the lower classes, but see the higher also—see with your own eyes, judge with your own understanding; but see all, and not a part; judge, but judge not without knowing all that is in dispute."

"I will try to follow your advice, my dear

sir," replied Morley; "for I perfectly understand and appreciate your reasoning. I merely felt inclined to look first into those lower grades, where so much misery and crime, I fear, exist, thinking that I could study with much more ease, the class in which I move myself, at an after period."

"Study them together, Morley," said the Banker; "look at no one part of the scheme, without a reference to the other. When you consider me, consider, at the same time, what influence my personal character and habits may have upon the footman that opened the door to you, and upon all my other servants. Then, if you will trace them home to the family cottage in the country or the lodging in some little back street in London, you will find, that just as I am a good or bad man, just as I am a kind or unkind master, just as I deal well and wisely with my inferiors, a corresponding result is transmitted through a long chain of cause and effect, to the tenants of the cottage or the lodging, of which I have been speaking. The same will be the case, though the process will be with more difficulty perceived, if you begin with a person in inferior station, and trace the results of his acts upon those above him. I have

known a casual word spoken by a vicious servant, plant the seeds of vice in a young and previously-innocent mind, which have afterwards produced a harvest of misery, desolation, and remorse, in the bosom of a happy and virtuous family. I give you this as but an instance, to shew that we are continually acted upon from below, as well as from above. Take, therefore, the best means, examine both at the same time: thus will you gain a perfect view, and will not suffer the ideas acquired by the contemplation of one side of any question, to be so fixed in your mind as to exclude those arguments and facts which would modify or remove them."

"I will certainly follow your advice, my dear sir," replied Morley, "both because I am convinced that it is good, and because you give it; but I only fear that my time in London will be too short to see anything deeply, if, by comparing continually, I double the inquiry."

"Do you know, Morley," said Mr. Hamilton, musing, "I am not sure that there is not a greater, a more miserable kind of evil brought about by studying only one side of a question deeply, than by studying both superficially. However, my dear boy, dine with us to-night, where you will see some of those in the higher

ranks, who are worthy of being known. There is a little party, too, I believe, in the evening, and you can begin 'Don Quixote' to-morrow."

Morley smiled, and promising to join the Banker's dinner-table, turned his steps towards the dwelling of his new friend, Lieberg. He easily found the house, which, as the reader well knows, was in a very central situation. The step of the door was washed with the greatest care, and rubbed with the peculiar kind of stone, to that especial purpose appropriate, till it was as white as snow. The door was of mahogany, with a small lozenge-shaped brass knocker, and a copper-plate fixed immediately under the instrument of noise, recommending, with the soft persuasion of the imperative mood, that the visitor should ring as well as knock. Morley Ernstein obeyed to the letter, and, without a moment's delay, a servant out of livery opened the door, and replied to his demand, that Colonel Lieberg was at home. The addition of military rank to his friend's titles did not at all surprise Morley Ernstein; for there was in his whole appearance a certain soldier-like look which is seldom acquired by a civilian.

Everything within the doors of the house was the pink of perfection. The drawing-room was

beautifully furnished, and in every part of it were to be seen objects of taste and *vertu*, not precisely those things which have acquired for themselves the technical terms of nic-nacs, and serve but to please the eye or amuse the fancy; but, on the contrary, things which appealed to the mind through various associations—small cabinet pictures of great value, bronzes from Herculaneum, marbles from Greece and Rome, beautiful specimens of the *cinque cento* workmanship, a little Venus from the hands of John of Bologna, and two or three tables of exquisite Florentine Mosaic.

Lying on a sofa, near the open window, which was curtained, if we may use the term, with manifold odoriferous flowers, habited in a dressing-gown of rich embroidered silk, and with his fine countenance full of eager interest in what he was reading, lay Everard Lieberg, with a book in his hand, on which his eyes were so intently fixed, that he did not seem to observe the opening of the door, till his servant pronounced the name of Morley Ernstein.

Starting up from the sofa, he laid down the book, and grasped his young friend's hand, welcoming him to London, and congratulating

him on the full recovery which his looks bespoke. The conversation then turned to Morley's plans and purposes, as it had done with Mr. Hamilton. But Lieberg declared that he had already laid out half-a-dozen schemes for Ernstein, which he must insist upon being executed. There were beautiful horses to be bought, there were races to be attended, there were singers to be heard, there were pictures to be seen, there was a wonderful mechanical invention which brought into action new powers in the physical world, there was a splendid orator in a chapel in Sloane-street, there was the loveliest woman in all Europe in the third box of the first tier of the opera, there was a new pamphlet on the immortality of the soul, and there was a romance of Balzac's, which seemed written for the express purpose of proving, that—

"Nought is everything, and everything is nought."

The multitude, the diversity, the opposition of the various matters which Lieberg proposed for his pursuit, at once bewildered and amused his young friend. But there was a fascination about his eloquence that was scarcely to be resisted. He contrived to describe everything in

such a manner, as to place it in the most attractive aspect to his hearer, seeing, with a skill that seemed almost intuitive, the exact nature and character of his tastes and feelings, and shaping his account accordingly. As an instance, his description of the lady, whom he had beheld on two successive nights at the opera, was such, that Morley almost fancied he must have seen Juliet Carr, although, to the best of his belief, she was nearly two hundred miles from London.

"I shall get bewildered with all that I have to see, to do, and to think of," replied Morley, "and so I fear must leave one half of your fine plans unexecuted. But at all events, we must classify them somewhat better, for you have propounded them in rather a heterogeneous form."

"Not at all, not at all!" cried Lieberg, "the very contrast gives the charm! Depend upon it, we should not think half so much of beauty if there was no ugliness in the world. Life ought to be like a Russian bath, the hot and the cold alternately; nothing will strengthen the mind so much, nothing will give us such powers of endurance, nothing will keep the zest of pleasure so fresh upon us, nothing will enable us

to change with so little regret, as the changing periods of our life compel us to seek new enjoyments, and follow fresh pursuits."

"I should think," replied Morley, "that with your incessant activity in the chase of pleasure, you would soon meet with satiety, and the world's stock of enjoyment would be exhausted while you are yet young."

"Impossible—impossible!" cried Lieberg; "the world's stores are inexhaustible to a man who has the capabilities of enjoying them all. But come, Ernstein, we are losing time even now. Come with me to T——'s; this is a sale day; I know of three horses that are perfect in every point; you shall buy which of them you like, and I will take any that you do not buy. Wait one moment for me while I put off my dressing gown and on my coat. There is 'Don Juan' for you, or a Pamphlet on the Currency, as you happen to be in the mood."

The horses were bought, and justified fully Lieberg's knowledge and taste; and the rest of the day Morley Ernstein spent with his new friend, hurried on from scene to scene, and from object to object, with that impetuosity which suited but too well with his own nature. At the same time, there was a degree of wit, sufficient

to enliven, but not to dazzle, a degree of eloquence, which carried away without convincing, in the conversation of Lieberg, whatever was the subject that it touched upon, which added interest to all that Morley heard and saw, by the remarks which followed. Thus, when he returned home to dress for dinner, his mind was in that state of giddy excitement, which every one must have sometimes felt after a hard day's hunting. As he made his preparations for the party at Mr. Hamilton's he resolved that the next day should be passed in more calm and thoughtful pursuits; but he little knew how difficult it is for a man to halt in any course on which he has once entered vehemently.

CHAPTER VI.

THE dinner-party at Mr. Hamilton's was such as might be expected, from the character as well as the situation of the man. Splendour, chastened by good taste, reigned at the table; and as he possessed none of the harsh austerity which sometimes accompanies age, although his whole demeanour displayed that calm gravity which sits so well upon the brow of years, the guests around his table were chosen from amongst the most cheerful, as well as from amongst the best of the society which London can afford. There were one or two distinguished statesmen, there were one or two mere politicians —and these classes are very distinct—there were one or two men of high rank and vast possessions; there were one or two persons distin-

guished for genius and for virtue; there were one or two gay young men, with very empty heads, who chattered to one or two pretty young women, who were easily satisfied in point of conversation. The rest of the party consisted of the wives of some of those we have mentioned, and the family of Mr. Hamilton himself.

All were London people; all had been accustomed to mingle much in London society: all were acquainted with everything that existed in the part of London which they themselves inhabited, and in the society with which they were accustomed to mix. I do not mean to say, that —as is so common—they knew nothing more. On the contrary, the greater part of the men and women who sat around that dinner-table, possessed extensive information upon many subjects; but still the locality in which they dwelt, and the society in which they moved, acted in some sort as a prison to their minds, from the limits of which they did certainly occasionally make excursions, but to which they were generally brought back again by the gaoler, custom, ere they had wandered far.

Such is ordinarily the great evil of London society to a stranger. Unless an effort is charitably made for the sake of the uninitiated, the conversation of the English capital is limited to

subjects of particular rather than general interest; and where a Frenchman would sport over the whole universe of created things, solely for the purpose of shewing his agility, an Englishman's conversation, following the bent of his habits, sits down by his own fireside, and seldom travels beyond the circle in which he lives. The effect of this contraction is curious and unpleasant to a stranger; but that stranger himself, if he be gentlemanly in habits and powerful in mind, very often produces a miraculous and beneficial change upon the society itself. If the people composing it really possess intellect and information, and the narrowness of their conversation proceed merely from habit, there is something in the freshness of the stranger's thoughts which interests and excites them. They make an effort to keep up with him on his own ground; the animation of the race carries them away, and off they go, scampering over hill and dale, as if they were driving after a fox.

Such was the case in the present instance. Morley Ernstein, though he had been in London several times during his school and college life, knew little of it but the names of certain streets, the theatres, the opera, and the park. He could not talk of what had taken place at

Almack's the night before. He was not conversant with any of the scandal that was running in the town; he did not know who was going to marry who; and was quite unaware that Lady Loraine had had two husbands before, and was going to take a third. All the tittle-tattle, in short, of that quarter of London in which fashionable people live, was as unknown to him as the gossip of the moon; and during some ten minutes, as he sat at a little distance from Mr. Hamilton himself, he remained in profound silence, eating his soup and his fish, with as much devotion as if the *Almanac des Gourmands* had been his book of common prayer.

After talking for some time to other people, Mr. Hamilton cast his eyes on his former ward, and knowing that he was neither shy, nor stupid, nor sullen, nor gluttonous, he wondered to see him buried in profound meditations over the plate that was before him. At that moment, however, his ear caught the sound of the conversation that was taking place on either side of Morley.

"The Duchess has such excellent taste," said the lady on his right hand; "so she insisted upon it, that it should be dark green, with a thin line of stone colour, between the

black and the green, and the arms only in light and shade."

Mr. Hamilton perceived that she was talking of the Duchess of Watercourse's new carriage, but Morley Ernstein knew nothing about it.

"Oh! but I know it did!" replied the young lady, on Ernstein's other side, speaking to a young gentleman, who might quite as well have been a young lady too; "it cost five hundred francs in Paris, and that is twenty pounds—is it not? But then it was *à point d'armes*, and it was trimmed with the most beautiful valenciennes, three fingers broad."

Mr. Hamilton guessed that she was talking of a pocket-handkerchief; but what she said was as unintelligible to Morley, as an essay on the differential calculus would have been to her. At that moment the young Baronet raised his eyes, with a curious sort of smile, to the face of his former guardian, and Mr. Hamilton certainly read his look, and connected it with their conversation of that morning. It seemed to say—"Notwithstanding all your exhortations, my good friend, the study of the higher classes of society does not appear to me to tend much to edification." But Mr. Hamilton, who knew that there is such a thing as being stupid by

convention, made an effort to give his young friend an opening, and consequently addressing the lady who had last been speaking, he said—"Pray what do you call *à point d'armes*, Lady Caroline?—I confess I am very ignorant, and so, I fear, is my friend Morley, next to you."

The young lady coloured a little, and laughed, saying—"I was only talking of a pocket-handkerchief which cost five hundred francs."

"Was any one wicked enough to give it?" said Morley, to whom she had addressed the last few words.

"O dear, yes," she replied; "we good people in London are wicked enough to do anything for the sake of fashion."

"There is candour enough, at least, in the avowal," thought Morley Ernstein, and there was something in the young lady's tone as she answered, which struck him, and made him conceive that his first opinion of her mental powers, might not be altogether accurate.

Let it be remarked, that the very general idea, that speech consists of words alone, is extremely erroneous. That the parts of speech, indeed, which are beaten into us at school, and for which, during a certain period of our lives, we curse all

the grammarians that ever lived, from Priscian down to Lily, consist entirely of words, is true; but he who looks closer than any of these grammar-makers at the real philosophy of language, will find that speech consists of three distinct branches—words, looks, and tones. All these must act together to make what is properly called speech. Without either of the two last branches, the words rightly arranged, form but what is called language; but that is a very different thing. How much is there in a tone?—what a variety of meanings will it give to the same word, or to the same sentence! It renders occasionally the same phrase negative or affirmative; it continually changes it from an assertion to an interrogation. The most positive form of language in the world, under the magic influence of a tone, becomes the strongest expression of doubt, and "I will not" means "I will" full as frequently as anything else.

Tones, too, besides shewing the meaning of the speaker at the moment, occasionally go on to display the character of his mind or the habitual direction of his thoughts; and it was by this interpreter that Morley Ernstein was led at once to translate the little insignificant moral that fell from his fair neighbour's lips, into a hint, that

her mind did not always dwell upon the frivolous things of which she had just been speaking. He followed the direction in which she led: the conversation grew brighter, more animated; many persons took part in it; many subjects were discussed; the freshness of Morley's mind led others gaily after him. The vehemence and eagerness of his natural character, carried him off to a thousand subjects, which he at first never dreamed of touching upon; and in short, the conversation of the next half hour was like the wild gallop which we have seen him take across his own park; and, as then too, he ended by leaping the wall at a bound, and plunging into a topic, which might well be compared to the high road, being neither more nor less than politics.

A sudden silence followed, and the young gentleman, feeling that he had gone quite far enough, drew in the rein, and stopped in full course. The impetus however was given, the thoughts of those around him were led so far away from all the ordinary subjects of discussion at a London party, that they would have found it difficult to get back again, even if they had been so inclined, which, however, was the case with but few of them; and one or two of the

elder and more distinguished persons present, purposely led Morley on to speak upon various subjects with which they judged him to be well acquainted. It was done with tact and discretion, however, in such a manner as to draw him out, without letting him perceive that any one looked upon him as a sort of American Indian.

On rising from table, a Peer who had figured in more than one administration, drew Mr. Hamilton aside, and made Morley the subject of conversation, while that young gentleman himself was talking for a few moments with an elderly man of amiable manners, called Lord Clavering.

"A very remarkable young man, Mr. Hamilton!" said the statesman—"somewhat fresh and inexperienced; but his ideas are very original, and generally just. Is his fortune large?"

"Very considerable!" replied Mr. Hamilton; "his father, whom you must have known, left two large estates, one called the Morley Court estate; the other still larger, but not so productive, in the wilds of Northumberland. He succeeded when very young, and as you may suppose, I have not let the property decrease during his minority.

"I know, Mr. Hamilton—I know, Mr. Hamilton!" replied the Peer, with a meaning smile. "Would it not be better to bring the young gentleman into the House of Commons? There is the old borough, you know, Hamilton, will be vacant after this session; for poor Wilkinson accepts the Hundreds, on account of bad health. My whole influence shall be given to your young friend, if he chooses to stand."

Mr. Hamilton bowed, and thanked the Peer, but somewhat drily withal, saying, "I will mention to him what your lordship says;" and then, turning away, he spoke to some of his other guests.

Not long after, the knocker of Mr. Hamilton's door became in great request, footman after footman laying his hand upon it, and endeavouring, it would seem, to see how far he could render it a nuisance to every one in the neighbourhood. Crowds of well-dressed people, of every complexion and appearance under the sun, began to fill the rooms, and certainly afforded—as every great party of a great city does — a more miscellaneous assortment of strange animals than can be found in the Regent's Park, or the Jardin des Plantes. Putting aside the differences of hue and colour-

ing—the fair, the dark, the bronze, the sallow, the ruddy, the pale—and the differences of size —the tall, the short, the fat, the thin, the middle-sized—and of name, the variations of which were derived from every colour under heaven, black, brown, green, grey, white, and every quarter that the wind blows from, east, west, north, and south—and the difference of features —the bottle-nosed, the small-eyed, the long-chinned, the cheek-boned, down to the noseless rotundity of a Gibbon's countenance, and the saucer-eyes that might have suited the owl in the Freyschutz—putting aside all these, I say there were various persons, each of whom might have passed for a *lusus naturæ*, were not many such to be found in every assembly of this world's children. There were some without heads, and some without hearts, some without feelings, and some without understanding. Some were simply bundles of pulleys and ropes, with a hydraulic machine for keeping them going—termed, by courtesy, flesh, bones, and blood, but none the less mere machines as ever came out of Maudslay's furnaces. Some were but bags of other people's ideas, who were propelled about the world as if on castors, receiving all that those who were near them chose to cram

them with. Others were like what surveyors call a spirit-level, the fluid in which inclines this way or that, according to that which it leans upon. There were those, too, whose microscopic minds enlarge the atoms under their own eyes, till mites seem mountains, but who yet can see nothing further than an inch from their own noses; and there were those, also, who appear to be always gazing through a theodolite, so busily gauging distant objects as to overlook everything that is immediately before them. There was, in short, the man of vast general views, who can never fix his mind down to particular truths, and the man of narrow realities, who cannot stretch his comprehension to anything that he has not seen. Besides all these, there was the ordinary portion of the milk-and-water of society; a good deal of the vinegar; here and there some spirits of wine, a few flowers, and a scanty portion of fruit.

In the midst of all this, what did Morley Ernstein do? He amused himself greatly, as every young man of tolerable intellect might do; he laughed at some, and with others; was little annoyed by any; and, with a heart too young to be a good hater, he saw not much to excite

anger, though a good deal to excite pity. There were some, however, who pleased him much. One or two young men, whose manners, tone, and countenance he liked; and more young women, whom, of course, he liked better still. He was a good deal courted, and made much of; and many ladies who had daughters, marriageable and unmarried, sent people to bring him up, and introduce him. Morley thought it very natural that such should be the case. "Were I a mother," he said to himself, "which, thank Heaven, I never can be, I would do just the same. People cry out upon this sort of thing—I really do not see why they should do so, more than censure a father for getting his son a commission in the Guards. It is right that we should wish to see our children well provided for; and so long as there is nothing unfair, no deception, no concealment, the purpose is rather honourable than otherwise."

Morley Ernstein knew that his large fortune and position in society must cause him to be regarded as a good match by more than half the mothers in England; he had heard so, and believed it; but he did not suffer that belief to make him either conceited, or suspicious. "It is a great advantage to me," he thought;

"for it gives me the entrance into many a house where I could not otherwise penetrate, and puts me above the consideration of wealth, which I might otherwise be driven to, in the choice of my future wife. Thank God! I can afford to wed the poorest girl in Europe if I find that she possesses those qualities which I believe will make me happy."

With these feelings, Morley Ernstein could hardly fail to make himself agreeable in the society of women; and certain it is, that many of those intriguing mothers, who go beyond that just limit which his mind had clearly fixed, thought, when they saw his careless and unsuspicious manner, his want of conceit in the gifts of fortune, and the readiness with which he met any advances, that he would be an easy as well as a golden prize, and prepared themselves to do battle with their rivals in the same good cause, for the possession of the young Baronet. They found themselves mistaken, for the simplest of all reasons, that mothers who could scheme, and contrive, and deceive, for the purpose of entangling him, were precisely those who could by no possible means bring up a daughter in such a way as to satisfy, even in manners, the young heir of Morley Court.

However, the evening passed pleasantly for Morley Ernstein. He was amused, as I have said; but, in truth, there was something more. He was interested and excited. Where is the young man of one-and-twenty to be found, who will not let his heart yield, in a great degree, to the effect of scene and circumstance?—to the moving of fair and graceful forms around him?—to the sound of sweet voices, mingled with music?—to the glittering of bright jewels, and of brighter eyes? and to soft words and gentle looks, enlivened from time to time by flights of gay wit, or even thoughtless merriment. Morley certainly passed through the rooms, criticising as he went, and found much interest in examining the characters of the persons present; but that was not all: he gradually became one of them himself in feeling, took an individual interest as well as a general one, in what was going on, shared in the excitement, and went home at length, after having enjoyed the whole probably ten times as much as any one there, except it was some young girl of eighteen, who met the man she hoped might love her, or some unknown youth who had never before obtained admission to the higher classes of English society.

CHAPTER VII.

THE general diffusion of knowledge is a very great thing, no doubt, and the cultivation of intellectual powers, in every grade of life and class of society, may probably produce a very excellent result; but yet, the man who goes about the world with his eyes open—it is certainly very rare to find such a man, for the great mass of human beings decidedly keep their eyes shut altogether, or, at best, but half unclosed—the man who goes about the world with his eyes open will be inclined, from a great number of very curious facts that he perceives, to deduce a theory, or, perhaps, if that be too positive a term, we may say, to build up an hypothesis, very much at variance with the dream of the French philosophers before the

first revolution, regarding the perfectibility of human nature. He will be inclined to imagine that the will of God may allot to a certain number of mortals only a certain portion of genius, and that when a very great share of this genius is concentrated in a few individuals of the number, the rest of the multitude remain dull and incapable, while the few produce the most sublime fruits of human intellect; and, on the contrary, where the allotted portion of talent is spread over a great surface, divided amongst many, not only few distinguish themselves from the rest, but none produce anything equal to the works brought into being by the two or three more gifted men which we have referred to in the other case. Thus, in the present age, where all is light, in not one of the arts do we find such wonderful results as we might anticipate from the general diffusion of knowledge. It is very true, great discoveries have been made—that we have had Herschells, La Places, Faradays—that we have discovered steam-engines, rail-roads, electric telegraphs; but, though the assertion may seem bold, the gauge of original powers in the human mind is to be found more in the arts than in the sciences. The sciences build upon tradition;

they are cumulative, and all the generations of the past together hold out the hand to raise up the diligent aspirer to a height above themselves. Not so the arts; for though the scientific part of each may be improved, by the accumulation of knowledge, that part which gives them their fire and vigour depends upon the genius of each individual artist; and just in the same proportion as you find a certain degree of skill very generally diffused, you will find a multitude of poets, painters, statuaries, and a sad deficiency of excellence amongst them.

Nothing, perhaps, shewed the grandeur and the grasp of ancient art more strongly than the vigour with which the old painters used the effect produced upon the human mind by the power of contrast, and the infinite skill with which they employed that power, so as never to violate those essential principles of harmony which affect painting and sculpture fully as much as they affect music and poetry. Where is the man of the present day who can set red, and yellow, and blue garments side by side with hues of the most sparkling brightness, and yet in no degree offend the eye, or produce the least sensation of harshness upon the mind? So, nevertheless, it is in the paintings of almost

all the finest old masters; and we shall also find, that in life itself, one of the greatest zests to enjoyment is striking contrast, provided we can obtain it without any harshness of transition.

Morley Ernstein sat at breakfast, on the following day, somewhat later than usual, thinking over all the people and the things he had seen, and all the words and sounds he had heard, and as, though somewhat variable in his moods, he was not one of those monsters of philosophy who come out into the world at the age of one-and-twenty, like Minerva all armed from the head of Jove, with a sombre and supercilious disgust for common life and its vanities—as he was, in short, neither less nor more than an eager, impetuous, though talented and feeling, young man, it must be confessed, he felt a little of that sort of giddiness of brain, and hurry of ideas, which follows excitement of any kind. His reveries, however, were soon broken in upon by the appearance of his friend Lieberg, who did not take the seat placed for him, but immediately exclaimed—

"Come, Ernstein, you are on the search for strange things; I have one all ready for you. I am going to Bow-street, and on what occasion I

will tell you by the way. There you may make a mental breakfast upon all the rogues and vagabonds that are served up fresh every morning about eleven, like new shrimps at Worthing."

"I shall be delighted," replied Morley. "I long extremely to see a good deal more of those gentry; they and their manners have always formed a subject of wonder and interest for my imagination."

"You may pamper its appetite here to the full," answered Lieberg; "but come, I shall be late."

Morley Ernstein was speedily equipped and rolling along in Lieberg's cabriolet towards that street where, in days of yore, a thieves' coffee-house appeared on one side of the way, nearly opposite to the place whence so many of them were sent to trial and to death. As a Bow-street officer once expressed it—"The house had been established there, that the gentlemen might always be ready when they were wanted." As they proceeded, Lieberg told him that his pocket had been picked of a gold snuff-box, coming out of the opera on the preceding night.

"The thing was done in the most deliberate manner," he said. "I found myself pressed

upon very hard by three strong fellows, and feeling a sort of waving undulation of my pocket behind, I turned round to look, and saw a very well-dressed man in the act of abstracting the box, without any great ceremony or delicacy. With the fullest intentions of knocking him down, I was prevented from moving in any way by the two men who pressed me on either side, and who, by a well-devised method of squeezing their victim, held me as if in a vice. Scarcely could I turn my head round again, when I found something tugging hard at my watch; luckily there was a strong guard round my neck, but, nevertheless, after the conquest of my snuff-box had been fully effected, the fellow who was before me still gave two hearty pulls, and when he ceased, had the impudence to say, with a grin—'That's a good chain, sir—I'd advise you to take care of it.' They then shouted to each other—'Be off—be off!' and began running up the Haymarket at full speed. I chased the man who had got the box for some way, crying—'Stop thief!' A watchman sprang his rattle, and tried to seize one of the fellows; but, by a dexterous movement, the pickpocket tripped up the poor Charley's feet, and he, rolling down before me, stopped me for the moment, and the

fellows escaped. I immediately sent for a Bow-street officer, described my friend who had got the snuff-box, and this morning was told that he is in custody. A curious hint, however, was given me by my good friend R——, the officer. 'Which do you want to do, sir—get your snuff-box, or punish the man? You can't do both, you know.' 'To get my snuff-box,' I replied; 'so if you can manage that for me, I can contrive not to be quite sure of his identity, you know.' 'No, no, sir,' said R——, with a wink of his eye, 'that's no go; you must swear to him positively, otherwise the fellows will think you've got no hold of him, and they'll keep the yellow. You be quite sure, and we'll have an alibi ready.' So you see, Ernstein, I am going to play my part in a pretty farce."

As he spoke the last words, the cabriolet rolled up to the door of the police-office, in Bow-street, round which were standing numerous groups of men and women, whose character was anything but doubtful, and whose appearance was certainly by no means prepossessing, whatever their practices might be. There might be seen the face pale and swollen from habitual drunkenness, looking like a moulded lump of unbaked dough, with an expression which will bear no

logical description, though it was marked and peculiar enough. It was the expression of stupid cunning, if one may use such a term, and is seldom to be met with, except in the countenances of those in whom drunkenness is only an accessory to other vices. There, too, might be beheld all the terrible marks, with which crime brands upon the forehead of the guilty the history of their faults and punishment. The red vermilion lines about the mouth and eyelids; the swelled and sometimes blackened eyes; the face covered with many a patch and plaster; the hair rugged and dirty; the dull, downcast look, not of active but of passive despair, seeing nothing round it, but fixing the corporeal eyes upon blankness, while looking with its mental eyes into itself. Oh! who can tell what it must be sometimes for the spirit to stare into the dark cavern of the heart, with that heavy, straining gaze, ineffectual, hopeless, finding nothing there—nothing to solace or to soothe; nothing to elevate or to support; nothing from the past, nothing for the future; nothing to be derived from memory; nothing to be bestowed on hope. Nothing!—nothing! All blank darkness, blotted over with the night of crime!

Through a crowd of such beings standing round the door of the police-office in Bow Street,

Morley and his friend drove up to the side of the pavement, and jumped out of the cabriolet, while Lieberg's young groom sprang to the head of the tall, powerful horse, who seemed as if he could have run away with him like a feather, and held him firm with both hands, like a small bull-dog pinning an immense bull. Along the dirty passage, the wainscoted walls of which, on either side, about five feet from the ground, were traced with a long-continued smear of greasy black, from the incessant rubbing of human shoulders, Lieberg, and his companion, walked on—one or two very doubtful-looking people giving way before the two swells, as they internally termed them—into the room where the magistrates were sitting.

There were several persons already at the bar, and in the place assigned to the attorneys were various shrewd-looking, keen-faced men, with eyes full of business, while in one or two instances an ostentatious blue bag appeared beside them. More than one personage, however, who seemed merely an idler, was also amongst the select; while at the back of the part appropriated to the people, chatting carelessly over totally different subjects, was a group of friendly officers and pickpockets, screened from the bench and the bar by a tolerable thick row of human heads, male

and female, through the interstices between which, a girl of fourteen, who seemed already a prostitute, and a boy somewhat younger, were striving to get a view of what was passing at the bar. The court itself possessed an atmosphere redolent of a peculiarly disagreeable smell of human nature, mixed with second-hand whiffs of beer, tobacco, and gin, which, to the more refined noses of the two gentlemen who now entered the court, and especially to that of Morley Ernstein, which was principally accustomed to the free air and sweet scents of the country, was anything but fragrant.

The case before the magistrates was disposed of ere any notice was taken of Lieberg and his companion; but then, the gentleman who had relieved him of his snuff-box on the night before, being placed at the bar, and the rank, station, and appearance, of the two friends being taken into due consideration by His Worship, they were invited to take their places on the bench, and the charge was entered into. Lieberg detailed the whole affair, and swore to the prisoner's identity; a keen-faced man asked him several questions on behalf of the prisoner, and the magistrate, after giving the personage at the bar

a proper warning not to say anything more than he liked, interrogated him in turn.

The man positively declared, that the gentleman must be mistaken, affirming, with a sly look and half-suppressed grin, that he did not mean to impeach the truth and honour of such a gentleman as he was, but that there was a mistake somewhere; for at that very hour, and for a full hour before and after, he was with a club called the "Rum Fellows," which met weekly at a certain house that he named. Very honest men, they were, he said, though they was Rum Fellows, and a number of respectable tradesmen too. He could prove it, he said, for there were lots of witnesses. He would call one immediately, whom he had sent for as soon as he was taken up.

He accordingly called a Mr. Higgins, but for a moment or two Mr. Higgins did not appear, and there was a murmur ran through the court in consequence, which no one took pains to keep from the ears of the bench, of, "Where is he? where is he?—where's Bill Jones's alibi?" and at length the call for Bill Jones's alibi was roared with a stentorian voice along the passage, and transmitted to the public-house on the opposite side of the street.

A moment after, in rushed a short, stout, swarthy man, very well dressed, after the fashion of a respectable tradesman. His coal-black hair was as smooth as a mirror; his linen was clean, and white; he had a pair of drab gaiters upon his sturdy legs, a black coat, a Marcellas waistcoat, and a coloured handkerchief. His eyes were black and large, his teeth fine and white, and on a fat little finger he wore a fat, long ring. He was a little out of breath with haste, and, as he appeared before the magistrates, he wiped from the corners of his mouth, the last vestiges of what the people of that place generally term, "something *short*," which he had taken to keep him fresh before the court. He bowed low to the sitting magistrates, low to Lieberg and Ernstein, and then nodded to the prisoner at the bar, exclaiming—"Ah, Bill! what's the matter? Surely you did not get drunk last night after you left us!"

His innocent mind being enlightened, in regard to the charge against his friend, he swore most positively, that Bill Jones had been with him and others, at a public-house named the "George," celebrating the mysteries of a club called the "Rum Fellows," at the very hour when Colonel Lieberg's snuff-box had been extracted

from his pocket. He swore that the said Bill Jones had been there an hour before and an hour afterwards; and he did, moreover, what, to the uninitiated, might seem a dangerous proceeding—that is to say, he entered into minute particulars as to what Bill Jones said or did on that occasion.

"Well, then, Mr. Higgins," said the magistrate, "if such be the case, there must be, doubtless, others of your club who can swear to the same facts as yourself; if the prisoner thinks fit, he can call another witness."

The prisoner was prepared upon this point also, and he accordingly called a Mr. Farebrother. While Mr. Farebrother was being sought for, Mr. Higgins thought fit to enlighten the court upon his profession, saying, he did not see why his word should be disbelieved, as he was a respectable tradesman.

"Yes, Mr. Higgins," said the magistrate, "I know you; you are a pawnbroker. You may go down."

Mr. Farebrother presented an appearance the most opposite that it is possible to imagine to that of his club-fellow, Mr. Higgins. He was a small, thin, narrow-made man; with a coat of good quality, but originally constructed for a

much more considerable person than himself. Indeed, he seemed to have a strong desire to be at room in his clothes, for the slate-coloured trowsers with which his nether man was ornamented, lapped vaguely over his shoes behind; which, if the stockings were in harmony with those shoes, might be, upon the whole, advantageous to him. His look was humble and sanctimonious, and, either from tenderness of heart or of eyes, he had a weeping look about him, which those who knew him believed to increase greatly under reiterated tumblers of brandy and water. We need not enter largely into the testimony which he gave; suffice it to say, he corroborated, in every point, the testimony of Mr. Higgins, and the story of Bill Jones.

The magistrate, as a matter of form, asked him some shrewd, sensible questions, premising them, however, by saying, in a low voice, to Colonel Lieberg, "You wont convict him; the thing is too well got up."

Mr. Farebrother resisted manfully every attempt to wring the truth from him; he had more than once been under the hands of Mister afterwards Baron Garrow, and, consequently, there was not an art by which a witness can be made to forget or betray himself, that he was

not thoroughly acquainted with, and ready to resist. Having terminated his examination, the magistrate turned to the accuser, with a silent smile, as if asking—"What am I to do next?"

"I certainly thought I was sure of the identity," said Lieberg, "and, accordingly, swore to the fact; but, after what we have heard, I suppose the matter must be given up."

The magistrate accordingly dismissed the charge; but Bill Jones, who stood upon character, seemed resolved to have the last word: "I hope, your worship," he observed, "that I quit this bar with honour."

"Pooh! nonsense!" said the magistrate. "Go along;" and the worthy gentleman slunk out of court, like a dog, under the influence of fear. Lieberg and Ernstein took leave, and departed also, followed, a step behind, by R——, the officer, who had been standing near the prisoner during the whole time.

"I beg your pardon, Colonel," he said, as soon as they got into the passage; "but I sha'n't be able to come up to you, to-day, so here's your box;" and he pulled out of his pocket, and presented to Lieberg, the splendid box, of which he had been robbed the night before. "The men will expect you to stand something,

sir," he said; "but I'll do what's right, and let you know what it comes to to-morrow."

"Do, do!" replied Lieberg. "But, harkye, R——, here's a young friend of mine who wishes to become acquainted with what is going on in all stations in society. Could you not give him a little insight into the lives of such gentry as we have just seen?"

"Lord bless you!—yes, sir," cried R——; "I will introduce him to them all, if he likes; but, you know, sir, there's a proverb about touching pitch."

"If there's any danger in it," said Lieberg, "of course he had better not."

"Oh, no danger in life, sir!" replied R——; "as I will manage for him; but he had better mind his watch, and his purse, and all that; or leave them at home. The gentleman, I take it, wants a lark; and if that's the case, he can have it; but it may cost him something, perhaps."

"It is not exactly a 'lark,' as you term it," replied Morley, in a more serious and sedate tone than the officer had expected from his years; "as my friend has told you, I want to see something of the mode of life of these people, as well as others."

"Oh! you are a flosofer, sir—are you?" said R——, "or, perhaps, a flantrofist! Well, sir, there's no reason why you shouldn't. It may cost a pound in lush, or what not; but as for your being safe, make your mind at ease about that; they know me too well to meddle with you. I wouldn't introduce you to any of that sort of fellows. Why, you know, sir, there are only two kind of people that set about regularly committing a murder. First of all, there's the fellow that knows he is well nigh up to the mark; he gets not to care what he does, and takes his chance of one thing or another. Those are the old, bad hands, that have been at every kind of thing for many a long year, and having got down low, are not able to keep upon the quiet lay, but must make some grand stroke to set them up altogether, or send them to the drop. Then there are others, sir, that do it unaccountably—men that haven't been half so bad as some others, who seem to take it into their head all of a sudden; those are the fellows that give us the greatest trouble, for we are not up to them; and sometimes we may be a week or ten days before we find out who has done it. But I wont put you in the way of anything that is dangerous. The best thing I can do for you,

is, to make you acquainted with Master Higgins, there; you'll find him a very gentlemanly sort of man, and as he lost, I suppose, a matter of three or four pound upon this snuff-box, it is but right to be civil to him. I could take you over there, sir, where they have gone to talk of the affair; but I think you had better let me bring him to you to-night, and then you can settle the matter together."

This plan was accordingly agreed upon; Morley gave his address to the officer, and as soon as it was dark R—— entered the young gentleman's sitting-room, in Berkeley-square.

"Oh, you are alone, sir, are you?" said he.

"Yes," replied Ernstein. "Have you not brought your friend with you?"

"Oh, yes," replied R——; "but I have left him behind, there, in the passage, talking with your servant, sir; for I thought you might have somebody with you, and might not like to have him seen."

Morley smiled at the officer's estimates of respectability; but he merely replied, "Is he so well known, then?"

"Oh, yes, sir; he is well known enough," said R——; "especially amongst us. However, as a hood for what he was coming about,

he brought something to offer you for sale, as if he were a regular tradesman."

"Which, I suppose, he expects me to buy," said Morley, "as the price of his favour and protection."

"Oh, no, sir," answered R——; "you need not buy anything, unless you like. He is always sure to get his market—it is the price that he takes the things at which he makes by."

"Well! bring him in, then," said Morley; "and we will talk about the matter afterwards."

Mr. Higgins was speedily introduced, and, as he entered, gave a rapid, but very marking, glance round the whole room. It is probable, that there was not a table, chair, or piece of china, down to the coffee cup and saucer with which Morley was engaged when he entered, that he would not have known again, had it been brought to pawn at his shop. Mr. Higgins made a low bow to the inhabitant of the apartment, after he had remarked upon the other things which it contained, and, seeing that Morley was making as keen an investigation of his person as he himself ever had made of any object for sale or pledge offered to him by the children of vice and misery with whom he had

generally to deal, he thought fit to begin the conversation first, and cut short a scrutiny of which he was not fond.

"Mr. R—— has done me the honour, sir," he began, in very tolerable language, "of bringing me here, because, he said you wished to see some little things in my way;" and having uttered this very equivocal sentence, he held his tongue, and left Morley to take it up in what sense he chose.

Morley was amused, but he replied in such a manner as still to leave the task of explanation to the other.

"I am very much obliged to Mr. R——," he said. "Pray, what have you got to shew me?"

The man grinned, to find that the young gentleman could deal in equivoques, as well as himself. Ere he answered, he gave an approving wink of the eye to the Officer, which might have been translated, perhaps—"He is not a fool, after all, though he is a gentleman." However, he would not be brought to the point; and putting his hand in his pocket, he produced a small shagreen case, which he opened, and laid on the table before Morley Ernstein; displaying to the wondering eyes of the young baronet, a pair of very beautiful diamond ear-rings. Mor-

ley gazed at them for a moment or two, in no small surprise.

"They are very handsome, indeed," he said, at length—"they are very handsome, indeed, as far as I am any judge of such things; but, pray, what do you intend me to do with these?"

"To buy them, sir," replied the man, quite coolly.

"I hope not to wear them, too," said Morley, "for that I shall scarcely consent to."

"O no, sir!" answered Mr. Higgins, laughing; "but such gentlemen as you, are always wanting diamond ear-rings. Why, there isn't one of all those ladies that you want to make a present to, who would not say they are as handsome a pair as ever were seen. I will let you have them a great bargain, too. Why, Lord ——'s young lady sold me a pair, the other day, for twice the money, which he had given her only two days before."

"A pleasant comment on such sort of connexions," thought Morley Ernstein; but he answered, aloud—"There is one objection to my taking these, even if I did want them, my good friend—namely, that I do not exactly know where they may come from."

The man paused, and stared in his face for a moment.

"Ha, now I take you, sir—now I take you!" he cried, at length. "But I can assure you, you are mistaken; they are not exactly mine. I am disposing of them for another party; but I think if you knew what an act of charity you are doing in buying them, you would give the full money willingly enough, and perhaps something into the bargain."

"Indeed!" said Morley, with his curiosity somewhat excited; "pray who do they belong to?"

"Oh, as nice a young lady, sir, as ever lived!" replied the man. "Her father was a clergyman, and her mother a lady of good fortune, and amongst the tip-top of the world; but there was a law-suit about the mother's fortune, to whom these ear-rings belonged, I have heard, and that ruined her husband, and broke her heart. She died first, and the parson not long after; and they left this daughter and a boy, who is a wild one, with about a couple of hundred between them, and some nicnacs. Well, the boy soon got through his money, and his sister's too; and from time to time he came to me, with a lot of things to sell. His sister, he let out the other day, had kept him and herself too by teaching; but now she hasn't had much

to do for some time, because she fell ill in the winter, and so lost her pupils. They are well nigh starving, the boy tells me, and in the end she is driven to sell her mother's ear-rings. She only asks forty pounds for them, sir—I think they are worth a hundred."

The story had every appearance of truth about it to the mind of Morley Ernstein. Such things were very likely to happen; and the man told it, too, like a true story. After asking why Mr. Higgins did not buy the diamonds himself, and receiving the satisfactory answer, that he had bought just such a pair before from Lord ——'s young lady, and could not afford to buy two, as well as having received truth-like replies to one or two other questions, Morley made up his mind somewhat precipitately to do three things; to purchase the ear-rings, to find out the brother, and to see if, through him, he could not do something for the sister.

"Pray where does this young man live?" he said, after having concluded the purchase; "do you think he will have any objection to speak with me about his affairs?"

"Oh, not he, sir!" cried the man; "the young scamp don't mind talking about them to the whole world. He 's no shame left! He lives at No. 3, Dover street, New-road, and his sister

too. A prettier girl I never saw, in all the course of my life, for I went there one day."

Morley put down the address; and having dismissed this subject, and arranged to make an expedition with the worthy Mr. Higgins, into some of the most reputable resorts of rogues and vagabonds, on the succeeding night, he suffered him and R—— to depart, waiting with some impatience for the following morning, when he proposed to put his Quixotic purpose, regarding the sellers of the diamond ear-rings, into execution.

When the Officer and Higgins were on the pavement of Berkeley-square, the former whistled three bars of an air as popular in its day as the elegant tune of Jim Crow has been within our own recollection. These bars were whistled with emphasis, which ought in all grammars to be considered as an additional part of speech, adding more significance to a sentence than either noun or verb. Higgins seemed to understand perfectly well what he meant, and said, in a tone of reply—

"He wants to see life, Master R——. We'll shew it him, wont we? His old servant told me that he was a tender-hearted young gentleman, and did a world of good in his own parish!"

CHAPTER VIII.

MORLEY ERNSTEIN made all sorts of good resolutions—that is to say, not virtuous resolutions, because, as yet, there was no temptation for him to be otherwise; but worldly good resolutions —the resolutions of prudence, propriety, economy. In short, all those sort of resolutions which one makes when one has fixed upon a certain line of conduct, from feeling rather than from judgment, and wish to enchain our purpose in its execution, by the exercise of that very power whose sway we have cast off. Morley Ernstein resolved, then, that he would inquire into all the facts with the most scrupulous accuracy; that he would not assist this young man and his sister beyond a certain point; that he would not assist the youth at all, unless he

found that there were hopes of amendment; and that, should such not be the case, he would employ the intervention of Mr. Hamilton to give aid to the young lady. No one on earth can doubt that these were all very prudent resolutions. If he had been forty, he could not have been more reasonable, though, probably, if he had been forty, he never would have formed them. But resolutions are always the sport of accident, and however harsh and hard it may be to say, yet I fear it is nevertheless true, that the course of conduct which needs to be guarded with such scrupulous care, had better never to be entered upon at all.

To return to Morley Ernstein. At the hour of eleven, his new cabriolet, which the poetical coachmaker had assured him would roll over the pavement like a cloud through the sky, and one of his new horses, which, if the same figurative personage had beheld him, would most likely have been compared to the wind impelling the cloud, were at the door of the hotel, together with a groom upon the most approved scale, bearing gloves as white as the Horse Guards', and the usual neat, but unaccountable sort of clothing, called leather breeches and top-boots. Morley Ernstein de-

scended with a slow step, entered his cabriolet thoughtfully, and drove towards the house to which he had been addressed, not going above a mile out of his way, in consequence of his ignorance of all those narrow turnings and windings which a professed London coachman is fond of taking. The street was a small one, and evidently a poor one, but Morley Ernstein had expected nothing else, and the house was neat and clean, with a white door-step, a clean door, and a small brass knocker. The young gentleman's groom, by his directions, applied his hand to the implement of noise, and produced a roll of repeated knocks, which, in any other country, would be held as a nuisance. A few minutes after, a neat maid-servant presented herself, and, in answer to the question, "Is Mr. William Barham at home?" replied in the affirmative.

Morley Ernstein then descended, gave his name, and was ushered up a flight of stairs, having a centre line of neat stair carpet, not much wider than one's hand. The drawing-room into which he was shewn was very nicely furnished with a number of little ornaments, not indeed of the kind that could be purchased, but of the sort which a dexterous and tasteful female-hand can produce, to trick out and decorate the

simplest habitation. There was a small piano in one corner of the room, a Spanish guitar, with a blue ribbon, lying on the sofa, a pile of music on the top of the piano, some very well executed landscapes lying, half finished, on the table, together with a box of colours, and a glass of water. All, in short, bespoke taste and skill, and that graceful occupation of leisure hours, which is so seldom found uncombined with a fine mind.

The room was empty of human beings, and while Morley was making his survey, he heard the maid-servant run up stairs to another flight, and say—"Master William—Master William, there is a gentleman below in the drawing-room wishes to speak to you."

There was no reply; and after some running about, the girl returned to say, that Master William had gone out without her knowing it. As she spoke, however, there was a knock at the door, and, exclaiming, "Oh! there he is!" she ran down to open it.

Morley Ernstein remained in the middle of the drawing-room, with the door partly unclosed, so as to allow him to hear the murmur of voices in the passage below, and the moment after, some light footsteps ascending the stairs. They

were not the steps of a man, and ere he could ask himself, "What next?" the door of the room opened wide, and a young lady entered the room, whose appearance answered too well the description which had been given, for him to doubt that she was the late possessor of the diamond ear-rings.

She seemed to be about nineteen; and, both in features and figure, was exceedingly beautiful. Dressed in mourning, there could be no bright colours in her apparel, but every garment was so arranged as tastefully to suit the other; and the whole was in the very best style, if not absolutely from the hands of the most fashionable dressmaker. Yet all was plain—there was nothing at all superfluous; and, indeed, her beauty required it not. The luxuriant dark hair clustered under the close bonnet, and contrasted finely with the pure, fair skin, warmed by a bright blush, like that of a rose, which one could hardly believe that the air of London would leave long unwithered. The large and dark, but soft eyes, spoke mind and feeling too; though there was an occasional flash of brightness in them, which seemed to say, that mirth had not always been so completely banished as it seemed at this moment. The

whole face looked but the more lovely from the darkness of her garb; and the beautiful small foot and ancle were certainly not displayed to disadvantage in the tight-fitting black silk stockings and well-made shoe. She bowed distantly to Morley, as she entered the room, with a look that expressed no sort of pleasure, adding—"The servant tells me, sir, that you wish to see my brother.' He will be here in five minutes; for I left him only at a little distance, at a shop where he wanted to purchase something. Will you not sit down?"

She pointed coldly to a chair, and as she spoke, began removing the drawings from the table; but Morley replied—"Perhaps I had better return again; I fear I interrupt you."

The lady looked up with an air of hesitation—"Indeed, sir," she said, after a moment's pause, "I do not know well how to reply to you. My brother will be angry, perhaps, if I say what I think, and yet——"

Morley was not a little surprised at this unfinished reply, and he answered, with interest, which, it is not to be denied, was increasing every moment under all he heard and saw—

"Pray explain yourself, madam. I think you must be under some mistake; but at all events,

your brother cannot be made angry by what you say; for of course, unless you desire it, I shall never repeat it to him, or to any one."

"Well then, sir," she said, gravely and sadly, "I was going to say, however rude and harsh you may think it, that I certainly would rather that you did not wait for my brother, and cannot but hope that he may be absent also when you come again."

Morley smiled at this very strange reception, but still he could not help thinking that there was some mistake. "Indeed, Miss Barham," he replied, "this is so unexpected and extraordinary, that I rather believe you are in error regarding me."

"Oh, no!" replied the lady in the same tone; "his description, sir, was very accurate. Are you not Mr. Neville?"

"Oh, no!" answered Morley, with a smile, "my name is Morley Ernstein, and I came with a view of doing your brother good and not harm."

"Ernstein!" she cried, starting with a wild look of joy and satisfaction. "Morley Ernstein! Oh! then you are the gentleman whose name was to the draft! It was you who bought the diamonds, then; but my brother told me he

had not seen you—that it was through a third person—" and she blushed deeply as she spoke.

"He said true, Miss Barham," replied Morley; "it was through another person, but from that other person I learnt something of your own and your brother's situation, in explanation of the cause for which the diamonds were sold."

"Oh! they should not have told all that!" murmured the young lady. "How did they know it? It was sad enough to sell them at all!" and her eyes filled with tears.

"I made the inquiry," said Morley; "and came here, believe me, without any intention of obtruding myself upon your confidence, but simply with the intention of seeing your brother, and ascertaining whether anything could be done for him. But now I am here," he added, "may I venture to ask who is this Mr. Neville for whom you took me? I hope I do not presume too far."

"O no, sir," she answered, with a faint smile, accompanied by another deep blush—"if you were aware, sir, of all that you have done by giving that sum for the ear-rings, you would feel that you have a claim to ask such a question. I do not know this Mr. Neville; my brother says he is a man of fortune, but I do

not believe it. I know, however, that he has led William into sad extravagance, that he and his companions have ruined him, and that William has ruined me, leaving me literally destitute, till your kindly taking those trinkets at a price I am afraid too high, has set me free from the difficulty that pressed upon me."

It may well be believed, that a young man of one-and-twenty, with a heart not the coldest in the world, began to feel some sensations of satisfaction at having met with the sister rather than the brother, notwithstanding all the good resolutions he had previously made.

"I have the ear-rings with me now," said Morley; "you will easily understand that I had no object in buying such things but to afford a little assistance where it seemed needful. I am aware that it has caused you much pain to part with these jewels. You must take them again, and keep the money as a loan, till such time as it is quite convenient for you or your brother to pay me;" and taking out of his pocket the little case which he had previously sealed up, he offered to return it.

The fair girl drew back, however, though not without a look of pleasure.

"Oh, no!" she answered, "I cannot take

them. You must excuse me—I do not borrow money of—of——"

"Of a stranger you would say," said Morley. "But surely, Miss Barham, that objection may soon cure itself. When you know me better——"

"Ah, then," she replied, "perhaps I might feel differently; but now, I cannot, indeed—besides, if my brother knew——"

"Would he be angry?" demanded Morley, thinking, if such were the case, the youth would be more scrupulous than had been represented.

"Oh, no!" answered the young lady; "but he would think—he would—he would—I cannot explain myself," she added. "But before he comes, let me express my deep sense of your generosity and kindness, sir. It is what one so seldom meets with, that it touches me the more."

"Nay, then," said Morley, "shew that you do not reject it by keeping these trinkets. I have no use for them—I can do nothing with them; the money that I gave will never even be missed in my banker's account; and as I said before, you or your brother can pay me when you can find it convenient. My object in coming here to-day," he added, "was to see what could

be done for him; and, as I was prepared to find him somewhat wild and thoughtless, what you have said concerning him has not surprised me. If I can befriend him, however, I will; but whatever may result from this visit between him and me, let me, at all events, be considered as a friend by you, Miss Barham."

"You have acted like one, indeed, this day!" she answered, with the tears rising in her eyes."

"Well, then," said Morley, "as the first proof that you regard me as such, take these things back: they only embarrass me."

As he spoke, there was another loud knock at the door, and before the quick step, which was instantly heard on the staircase, had reached the room, Morley had placed the little case in Miss Barham's hand, and she had received it with evident confusion and hesitation. The next moment the door opened wide, and a young man, scarcely of eighteen years of age, entered quickly, with his long and shining, but somewhat dishevelled hair, tossed loosely about a face, quick and intelligent enough, but bearing an expression both wild and cunning. His complexion was very different from that of his sister, for he was very pale and sallow, and there

was a certain look of premature dissipation about him, which is not easily to be mistaken.

"Here is Neville, Helen!" he exclaimed, as he entered; but the instant his eyes lighted upon Morley Ernstein, he started, and looked both surprised and annoyed.

Ere anything more could pass, however, a slower step was heard mounting the staircase, and through the door, which the youth had left open behind him, appeared a fashionably-dressed man coming up with an air of easy nonchalance, as if he were entering the abode of people very much below him, looking at his boot, which he tapped occasionally with his cane, and not raising his eyes in the slightest degree towards the drawing-room—though the door, as I have said, was open—till he was upon the very threshold. When he did look up, however, and saw the figure of Morley Ernstein standing exactly opposite to him, he started, with an appearance of even greater surprise than had been shewn by the brother of Miss Barham; and at the same time his brow contracted, and his eye flashed, in a way that he seemed to think very imposing, for it was evident that his whole demeanour had much preparation in it.

Morley, in the meantime, could hardly sup-

press a smile, at seeing the man for whom he had been mistaken, and who had been described as so much like himself. This Mr. Neville was certainly not less than fifteen or sixteen years older; he was shorter, too, by two or three inches, not nearly so powerful in make, and though dressed in the very extreme of the fashion, which, in that day, was somewhat extravagant in itself, he wanted that easy tone and indescribable grace which marks the gentleman, both in mind and in station.

The feelings of Miss Barham, however, were evidently anything but pleasant, and it was with some satisfaction that Morley saw her draw in a slight degree nearer to himself, as her brother and his companion entered. All the parties gazed upon each other for a moment in silence; but the very first words which were spoken, and which proceeded from the lips of Mr. Neville, at once shewed Morley that the fable of the borrowed plumes might be acted in real life. "I say, Barham!" he exclaimed—"what is all this, my boy?"

Morley might perhaps have felt himself a little awkward at being found alone with Miss Barham, by any high-toned man of his own class; it might have produced an instant shy-

ness—an uncertainty as to whether he should explain the circumstance or not; but the words, the manner, and the voice of the worthy who now entered, at once set him at his ease.

"Mr. Barham," he said, "I called here to speak a few words to you, but as I find you are occupied, I shall take another opportunity."

"And pray, sir, who may you be?" demanded Mr. Neville, not suffering the young man to reply.

"I really do not know, sir," said Morley Ernstein, looking at him from head to foot, with a contemptuous air, "why I should answer you any questions, until I know who it is that presumes to put them to me."

"My name is Neville, sir—my name is Neville," exclaimed the other; "have you anything to say to that?"

"Nothing at all, sir," replied Morley, "as my business does not lie with Mr. Neville, but with Mr. Barham."

"But I am Mr. Barham's friend, sir," said Mr. Neville, "and he does not seem to know you any more than I do. I am Mr. Barham's friend, I say."

"I am very sorry to hear it," replied Morley, calmly, though provoked; "for, from all I can

see, your acquaintance does not seem likely to be advantageous to him."

"Oh, sir! oh!" exclaimed the other, with a furious look—"now, I insist upon having your card. I will have satisfaction, sir—I will have satisfaction."

"Nay, my dear young lady," said Morley, gently passing Miss Barham, who was endeavouring to interpose; "I understand this gentleman, and you do not.—I never give my card, sir, to people that I do not know. If you are the sort of person I take you to be, such satisfaction as a horsewhip may give, you shall command. If you be not such a personage, and prove the fact to my conviction, I will either make you an apology, or meet you in the way that you require. Stand out of the way, sir, for I am very likely, at this moment, to throw you from the top of the stairs to the bottom. Mr. Barham, I much wish to have a few words of conversation with you, and if you could make it convenient to call upon me to night, at Thomas's, in Berkeley-square, towards seven o'clock, I should be glad to see you. You will ask for Sir Morley Ernstein. Miss Barham, I shall have the honour of paying my respects to you on another occasion."

"Missed fire, by Jove!"—exclaimed Mr. Neville, as Morley descended the stairs, opened the door, and beckoned to his cabriolet, which was wandering up and down the street—"I say, what's to be done now? That bird's worth plucking, and you are a fool if you don't do it. I must have a feather, too, if it can be managed—but pray introduce me to your sister. Miss Barham, how do you do?"

Miss Barham drew back. "I must beg to decline the introduction, sir," she said; "I have no inclination to make your acquaintance; I told William so, this morning, and he might have saved me the pain of seeing you here, as his only pretext was an appointment to meet you, and it seems that you had joined each other before you came in."

"Hey! how is this, Barham?" exclaimed the other; "I thought you had talked to her about it all."

"So I did," replied William Barham; "but she is foolish. I tell you what, Helen; this wont do—you don't know what you are about; and it is all nonsense, too, because you have often told me about such things that——"

"It will so far do, William," replied Helen Barham, interrupting him, "that I will beg you

will leave me my rooms to myself. If you do not, I must take means to free myself from society I do not like."

Thus saying, she passed through the door leading into another chamber, and was heard to lock it behind her.

"Leave me with her, Neville," said her brother—"leave me with her; I will bring her to, and will join you in an hour at Williams's."

"Well, mind you!" cried the other, somewhat sternly—"remember, my lad, I have got my thumb upon you!" and uttering these words, Mr. Neville marched out of the room. As soon as the door of the house closed upon him, the youth knocked gently at that of his sister's room. "Helen!" he exclaimed; "Helen!—he is gone. Do come out and speak to me, there is a dear girl!"

Helen Barham did come out; but her eyes were red with tears. "Oh, William!" she said, "I wonder you are not ashamed to see me——"

"Nonsense, Helen," he cried, "I have often heard you laugh at idle prejudices."

"Fie—fie!" she continued, not attending to him; "to wish to sell your sister to such a being as that! I did say that there is nothing I would not do to save you from destruction, but—oh! William ——"

"Well, then, Helen," he said, "This is the only way of saving me from destruction."

"Not now, William," she exclaimed, "not now! The money which you got for the ear-rings will do for some time, surely; and before that is spent, I may get some other means of keeping myself and you."

"You will never get enough to keep us comfortably," replied the youth; "and as to that, it does not matter whether you do or not; I tell you, the only way to save me from destruction, is——"

"Is by my own, you would say," replied his sister.

"Stuff and nonsense!" answered her brother; "they never hang people for that, Helen; and I tell you, that man could hang me, or very near it, if he chose."

The face of Helen Barham turned as pale as death, and she sank into a chair without any reply, gazing in her brother's countenance, with silent agony, for several moments.

"It is true, Helen," said her brother, doggedly, and setting his teeth hard, "it is true what I tell you."

"Whoever heard of such horror!" exclaimed Helen Barham. "The brother would sell his

sister to be the mistress of a low-bred, horrible villain; and that villain would hang the brother, if the sister will not consent to her own destruction. Is that it, William?"

"Not exactly," replied the youth; "you twist the matter which way you please, Helen. I said he could hang me if he liked, not that he would; and as for the rest, Helen, I don't sell you. I only want you to do the best for yourself, and for me too. You can never get enough by teaching, to keep me or you either. You are fond enough of fine clothes, I can tell you; and here's a man will give you as many as you want. He will settle five hundred a-year on you, just as if you were his wife. He can't marry you, you know, because he is married already."

"Hush! hush! hush!" cried Helen Barham, stopping her ears—"hush! and leave me. Do not make me hate myself! What did I ever say, William, to make you think that I would become any man's mistress for fine clothes?"

"No," replied her brother, "but I have heard you say that marriage is love; that a man and woman who have promised themselves to each other, ought to consider themselves just as much married as if all the ceremonies in the world had passed between them."

Helen hid her eyes in her hands, saying, "I have been very foolish, William, and I have talked wildly; but you have misunderstood me —sadly, too. I meant, that they had never a right to break that promise. Love!—can you talk to me of love with such a man as that?"

"Why, I suppose, then, you are in love with the other I found here," said her brother. "Pray what was he doing here with you alone?—What is it he wants with me, too?"

"He wants," exclaimed Helen, her face brightening up with renewed hope—"he wants to save you, William; he wants to aid you—to deliver you, if you will let him. Go to him, William—go to him; tell him the whole—tell him all the truth, and, I am sure, if it be in the power of man to help you, he will. He is generous and kind; and came here for the purpose of assisting you; he came not to see me; but the man from whom he bought the diamonds told him something about you, and he came on purpose to offer you aid."

"That old fool, Higgins, has made a blunder," said the youth, thoughtfully; "I'll go and call upon him, Helen, and see if anything can be got out of him; but, as to telling him the whole, you do not think me such a fool, do you, to put my

neck in two men's power, because it happens to be in that of one? You seem to be mightily smitten with him, Helen; and perhaps might not object to the arrangement there, eh? But, I'll tell you what—that wont do, my lady. Neville's the man, depend upon it; and I insist that you treat him civilly, at least. For to-day, I must quiet matters down as well as I can, but to-morrow I shall bring him here to tea."

Helen Barham again burst into tears, and in that state the youth left her. But ere half an hour was over, Mr. Neville was again in the house, and, passing by the maid, he entered the drawing-room unannounced, saying, he "only wanted to speak two words to Miss Barham." He certainly was not long with her, and what he said was in a low tone, for the maid, who was not at all inquisitive, could not catch the words through the keyhole of the door. In less than a minute and a half, he quitted the house again, and the maid looked at him from the parlour-window, as he mounted a beautiful horse and rode away. The moment after, she heard something heavy fall in the room above, and, running up, found Helen Barham lying senseless on the floor.

CHAPTER IX.

I AM not fond of scenes of low vice; I love not to dwell upon them. Although in endeavouring to form for myself a just estimate of human nature, to learn, for the sake of comparing them, the effects produced upon the mind of man by every station of life, and every earthly pursuit, I have visited the haunts of the low and the guilty, and mingled, for a brief season, with the profligate, the criminal, and the base, in many of the countries that my feet have trod, yet I look back upon such moments, and such scenes, as a physician may be supposed to look back upon the lazar-house and the plague-hospital, whither he has gone for instruction, but which he recollects with horror and with pain.

What was very justly said, by a man who had

made acquaintance, actuated by no evil views, with that most miserable class of beings—the fallen women of a great city—that "each carries a tragedy about with her," may well be said of the criminals who every day expose themselves to fresh punishment by fresh crimes. It is not, indeed, with the latter as with the other unhappy beings I have just mentioned, that there is always a fund of broken hopes and lost affections and crushed sensibilities; for man, made of sterner stuff, often strides on rapidly into evil by his own choice, and corrupts himself with his eyes open. With men the tragedy is not enacted in their own heart; it is amongst parents, relations, friends—amongst those who have built up their hopes and loves upon a being who shakes them all to the ground, and leaves scarcely a ruin standing. But even were it not for this—were the criminal alone in all the world—had he disappointed no father's brightest wishes—had broken no mother's heart—had he never scattered dismay and sorrow round the fond domestic hearth, nor cast the shadow of the Upas on the hearts of brothers and sisters, surely the degradation of high intellect, the debasement of all man's powers, corporeal and mental, the extinction of bright innocence, the condemnation of an immortal spirit,

are tragic acts, enough to wring the heart of even the sternest when he beholds crime. It is the apathy of age, the deadened sense of habit, or the levity of youth, that enable us all to walk almost indifferent through scenes, where, every day, sorrow, and sin, and destruction, are taking hold of beings like ourselves.

The character of Morley Ernstein, as I have before depicted it, will enable the reader to judge easily of the feelings with which he visited, in company with Mr. Higgins, one of the nocturnal meetings of a body of notorious criminals. The eager and impetuous part of his nature was, for the time, predominant; and the spirit of adventure which the act implied, heightened by a change of dress, with which the worthy pawnbroker had furnished him, and the novelty of the whole scene, made him feel amused rather than otherwise, and caused him to forget altogether the more painful aspect of that which was before his eyes.

I will not dwell upon all that took place, though, for reasons which will be seen hereafter, it is necessary to touch upon these events in some degree. Suffice it to say, that Mr. Higgins introduced his young friend, pledged himself for his *honesty*, and bestowed such commendations

upon him as the society and the circumstances required. Morley, not very many years before, had been at a public school, where, amongst other branches of learning, nothing is acquired more thoroughly than the art of making one's way in every sort of male society. On this occasion he gave himself up to the impulse of the moment, and, without affecting to talk their slang, or imitate their manners, he soon found himself highly popular amongst the ruffians by whom he was surrounded. There was a blithe jollity about them, which, probably, nothing but utter recklessness of all that others hold dear could produce; and one of the men in particular, whom the rest called Harry Martin, had a gay, good-humoured frankness; a daring, insolent, but cheerful merriment, which Morley could very well conceive might prove not a little engaging to persons of his own class. Martin also seemed struck and amused with Morley, laughed with him, talked with him, tried to make him drink, and, not being successful, had many a joke at his puny habits, even while he evidently admired his self-command.

After having remained with these men for about an hour, Morley perceived a note brought in, or rather a scrap of paper, for it was not

doubled up into the form of a letter, which, being handed to Harry Martin, he replied—"Oh, very well;" and pushed it over to Higgins. A momentary consultation ensued, and then a youth of about two or three and twenty was singled out, and placed at the top of the table, when Martin, pulling out a handsome gold watch, remarked, aloud—

"It is now half-past nine, gentlemen; and this is our friend, Billy Barham."

Morley Ernstein stared. Although the name was similar, there was not the least resemblance in the world, between the Billy Barham before his eyes, and the William Barham whom he had seen in the morning. However, everything went on as before; Billy Barham laughing, drinking, and talking with the rest, and his friends around always taking especial care to address him by his two names.

After a certain space of time, Morley found the scene begin to grow tiresome. It was not exactly what he had expected; there was less distinctive character about it than he had imagined he should find; very little, indeed, to bring away, or which could bear in any degree upon views of philosophy, or serve the purposes of instruction. He accordingly gave Higgins, who sat

next to him, the signal that had been agreed upon, as indicating his wish to depart.

"Stay a bit, sir," whispered Higgins—"stay a bit. We mustn't go yet, the time's not up."

Morley accordingly remained, till Higgins informed him that they might go, adding, in the same low tone—"You'll pay for the lush, I suppose."

"Oh, yes!" replied Morley; but, upon putting his hand into his pocket, where he had left a few sovereigns for accidental expenses, he found that they had disappeared. He uttered not a word, however, in regard to his suspicions, though he saw the eyes of Higgins, Martin, and one or two others upon him at the moment.

"Come, Mr. Higgins," he said, "you know me well enough to trust me. You pay the reckoning for us all, for I have forgot to bring any money."

"That's a hearty, now!" cried Martin, tossing down the sovereigns upon the table—"they've been handed up to me; but I wouldn't take them from such a fellow, for my little finger."

"Well then," said Morley, leaving them on the table—"let all that is over the reckoning, be spent by the party, and so good night to you all."

"We'll drink your health, sir!" cried one of the persons present, and with such benediction, Morley and Higgins were suffered to depart.

"And now, Mr. Higgins," said Morley, as, after threading a great number of narrow streets, they entered King Street, Covent Garden—"pray tell me, was that young man's name—I mean the one they took up to the top of the table—really William Barham, as well as the youth you mentioned to me yesterday?"

"Lord bless you!—no, sir," replied Higgins, "no more than yours!"

"Then, why did they call him so?" demanded Morley Ernstein.

"Why, that's a bit of a secret, sir," replied Higgins; "but, however, I don't mind telling you; and now, let me see how I can manage to make you understand. You know something of an alibi already, I think, sir. Well, you see, many a good witness might be caught tripping, if he were to come into court with a story told him by another: and so, when we know that any one is upon the lay, or have notice given us that something's going on, where such and such men that we know may chance to put themselves in need of an alibi, we call one or two of the fellows present, by the names of the men

that are out, and talk to them all night as such. Then every man that is there present, can swear with a safe conscience, that he saw Billy Barham, or any one else, at this house or that, and he can swear to the place, and name what was said, and be quite sure that if any one else is called he will swear to the same likewise; so that there can be no contradicting oneself or one another. That's the way we get up an alibi. So, you see, to-night some one sent in to say that Billy Barham was out upon some job; and though he did not tell us himself, we did the thing just out of kindness to him, because he's a young hand. But it wont do, sir; he'll get pulled up some of these days! He is going it a great deal too fast."

"I should think so, indeed," said Morley; "and, pray Mr. Higgins, who is a personage named Neville?"

"Oh, sir," replied Higgins, "Neville was what we call a *prime swell;* he's getting a little bit down now, but I can recollect the time when his line of business was altogether on the race-course, and at certain houses in the neighbourhood of St. James's. Then he took to getting money by lending it, and as long as he kept to pianoforte selling, and all that, it did very

well; but he was fool enough to let a story get into the papers, about his filching some bills, and though the serjeant cleared him of that cleverly, it blowed him a great deal. Then he got horse-whipped one day, and shewed a little bit of the white feather, and that did him no good with any party. But, if you are asking because of what happened this morning, I can put you up to all that in no time."

"Indeed!" said Morley. "Then you have heard all about this morning's business, it seems."

"To be sure!" replied Higgins. "The stupid young fool came to me to-night, about six o'clock, or so, and told me the whole; so I shewed him that Neville would never do for his sister, and told him what I wanted to make up for her. I said to him, there's Sir Morley Ernstein, he may do very well, if you like, and what he promises he'll keep; but as for Neville, he may have a hundred pounds in his pocket to-day, and not twopence to-morrow; and as for his doing what he says he will, even when he can, there's no use in trusting to that. We know him well enough—Master Neville. He's not a man of honour, sir."

A new light was beginning to shine upon Morley Ernstein; he was now, indeed, seeing human existence, under a fresh aspect; he was too young to be suspicious, but yet he had heard a good deal of the world, if he had not mingled with it much; and the horrible scheme of villany and vice, of which the reader is already aware, but which now first broke upon him, made him ask himself, which were the agents, which the victims, in the sad affair wherein he had himself become so suddenly and unexpectedly a participator? or, was he alone the object of this nefarious arrangement? Was Helen Barham, beautiful and high-minded as she seemed, but a light woman, seeking for some new paramour; or was she in reality what she appeared, and a mere victim to be immolated by the criminal selfishness of her brother? He paused then, for several minutes, without making any answer; he was, in fact, putting on his armour, if one may so call it, finding himself suddenly attacked in a manner that he did not expect. Accordingly, after some silence, he replied, "Well, Mr. Higgins, I think you spoke quite reasonably. She is a very beautiful girl, certainly. Pray, who did she live with last?"

"No, sir; no," said Mr. Higgins, with more

warmth than Morley had expected. "She never lived with anybody that I know of—no, I'm sure she hasn't—but I'll tell you the plain truth of the matter. I have been given to understand, that you are a gentleman that wants to see life; now you know very well, sir, that young gentlemen that set out upon that lay, make a point, in the first place, of picking up some lady. Well, sir, what I've got to say is no bad compliment to you, either. I had seen this youth—this William Barham—almost every day, for the last three or four months; and I had heard all about his sister from him, and how she had laboured to support him in his wild ways. Well, sir, I found that now, having pawned or sold everything he had in the world, and almost everything she had, too, and done a great many other things besides, which we wont talk about, he was determined to sell his sister at last to some one. So, sir, when I saw you, and heard you talk, I thought that you were one who, if you did take the young lady, would not treat her as some men do, but, if some time you liked to marry, and part with her, would provide for her handsomely. It was that made me put you up quietly to go into that house."

"A very hopeful scheme, indeed!" said Morley. "But it seems to me, my good friend,

that this youth, who is, evidently, as hopeless a scapegrace as ever cut a purse, or trod the drop, has other views for his sister."

"Ay, sir; he's a bad one," answered Mr. Higgins. "He's one that will come to no good. He might have been in a very genteel way of business, if he had liked it, without any risk either; but there's no keeping him steady, and he's got into bad hands that don't care how soon they ruin the young man altogether, provided they screen themselves."

The moralizing vein of Mr. Higgins might, in some degree, have surprised Morley Ernstein, had he not thought that there was something equivocal in the good gentleman's expressions, and that, perhaps, what he termed a genteel way of business, might be neither more nor less than gambling, swindling, or thieving dexterously, and that the more dangerous courses to which he alluded, might only be crimes easy of detection. Mr. Higgins went on, however, after a moment's pause, saying—"I can't help thinking, that young scoundrel has got himself entangled with Neville, in a way that he'll not easily break through; Neville's got a string round his foot, I have a notion."

"I do not understand exactly what you mean," replied Morley.

"Why, I mean, sir," replied Higgins, "that the fellow has got Bill to do something which might swing him, if Neville were to 'peach. I don't know what it is, either; but I could soon know, if I liked."

"Well, then," answered Morley, "I wish you would like, and let me know; and if ten pounds or so will get at the matter, I should not mind giving it, though you know very well that I would not use the information to the young man's harm."

"Oh, I understand, sir, what you want," replied Higgins, while at one comprehensive view he saw every possible use that a gentleman, situated as Sir Morley Ernstein was, could make of the intelligence he was desirous of obtaining; and, remaining perfectly satisfied that the object was to frustrate Neville, and at once to put brother and sister into his own power, he repeated, with greater emphasis than before, —"Oh, I understand, sir—I understand!"

"You will almost always find me, Mr. Higgins," said Morley, "at about six o'clock, when I come home to dress for dinner; and, of course, I need not say that I should like the information as soon as possible."

"You shall have it, sir—you shall have it,"

replied Higgins, "if not to-morrow night, for certain, the night after."

"So be it, then," replied Morley; "good night! Mr. Higgins;" and taking his way homeward, he left his worthy companion to pursue his path to the shop.

CHAPTER X.

At the hour of ten, on the following morning, Morley Ernstein sat at breakfast with his friend Lieberg. He had come thither in haste, but as his friend's servant was in the room, he had suffered the cup, the saucer, the plate, the knife and fork, and every usual implement of breakfast-eating, to be placed, before he touched upon the subject which had brought him thither at that hour of the morning. As soon as all was arranged, and Morley had scanned the whole of the beautiful china upon the table, each piece of which was worth a Jew's eye—as soon as the young gentleman himself had reached the middle term of his first cup of coffee—as soon as some very thin broiled ham, and some excellent caviare, looking like all the

ances. There is one thing, however, which I very much doubt—namely, that these men will ever give us the meeting at all."

"That is their affair," answered Morley; "the honour of fighting this man, I can assure you, Lieberg, is not what I can desire; but, of course, one must either make up one's mind to meet a man, or set a great guard upon one's tongue towards him."

"I do not know that there is any 'or' in the question, Ernstein," replied Lieberg; "with such a man as this, indeed, there are twenty alternatives—kicking, horse-whipping, throwing out of the window, sending him to Marlborough-street. But with any other sort of person, there is nothing to be done but fighting when he asks you, for a man of courage and a gentleman."

"I differ with you, Lieberg," said Morley. "I can easily conceive, that the man who upon principle refuses to fight a person to whom he gave no reasonable cause for offence, may be both a man of courage and a gentleman; but the man who chooses to give rein to his tongue against another man, and then refuses to fight him, can be nothing but a coward; and, therefore, though this Mr. Neville be a scamp, I will not baulk him of his humour."

"You will sadly disappoint him," answered Lieberg; "for, depend upon it, he calculates upon your dislike to meet such a man as he is, and hopes to make something of it, either as a salve for a sore reputation, or a plaster for a broken purse. But come, Ernstein, pray explain to me, if there be no secret in it, how you were brought in contact with this very reputable personage. You really must have been making your way in the world."

Morley Ernstein found more difficulty in replying to Lieberg's question than he anticipated. Between one-and-twenty, and seven or eight-and-twenty, there is an extraordinary gap, a vaster space, at least in general, than is to be found betwixt any other two periods of life, with a similar interval of years. That gap is filled by the curious thing called experience—a sort of vapour, through which we see every object under a totally different aspect on the one side of the space and the other—a smoke, raised from the burning of a great bonfire, formed partly of certain weeds called hopes, enthusiasms, confidences, expectations, and partly of certain withered sticks, round which these weeds were accustomed to cling not ungracefully—called illusions. To the eyes

on the one side of this gap—I mean the youthful one—a person standing on the other side seems so far off, that it is scarcely possible for them to reach the hand unto them; and such was the case with Morley Ernstein and Lieberg. That gap, and perhaps more, was between them, and Morley was afraid that Lieberg could not or would not understand him: or, to resume the figure which I have twisted this way and that—somewhat too often, perhaps—already, he was afraid of giving up to him any of those flowering weeds whereof I have spoken—those enthusiasms, hopes, and confidences—lest he should cast them down and burn them in the bonfire of experience.

That part of the affair which related to Ellen Barham he did not like to mention to one whose views were formed in a different school from his own. He knew not what might be Lieberg's comments, what his inferences, what he might say, what he might suspect; and there is nothing that a young and high mind shrinks so timidly from as suspicion; it is the cowardice of a generous heart. As the matter was to be told, however, for he could not very well avoid it, he spoke with his wonted candour of the whole affair, related the

manner in which the situation of Helen Barham and her brother had first been brought to his knowledge, his interview with her, and the subsequent conversation which he had had with good Mr. Higgins. But the demeanour of Lieberg was very different from that which he had expected. Not a smile appeared upon his lip which could have alarmed a heart the most sensible to ridicule; not a word passed from his tongue which could shock one feeling in Morley's breast. He listened in perfect silence, with his eyes bent gravely on the ground, and remained without answering for some moments after the other had done speaking.

"This is a curious and interesting history," he said, at length; "and has some of the strangest points in it that I know of. Many men in London, who practically know as much of its ways as I do, but who perhaps have not speculated upon them quite so philosophically as I have, at least, tried to do, would conclude that a story thus told to a young and inexperienced man of fortune, by a mere 'fence,' as they call such fellows as Higgins, must be a trumped-up tale for the purpose of cheating; the woman a loose woman, the boy a swindler, and the man Neville merely brought in to give greater

effect to the scene. But I know better than this, Morley, and can very well conceive the whole story to be true. Those who see a great deal of London will find, if they do but take the trouble to investigate the matter impartially, that even in the innermost recesses of vice and iniquity, mingling with all that is wicked and bad in the very hearts of men given up to various sorts of crime, there are peculiar virtues, good qualities, bursts of feeling, touches of generosity, and even of truth, which lie, like the jewels of Golconda, diamonds amongst mud, or grow, like some of our most beautiful plants, from a soil formed of filth and corruption. Do not misunderstand me: I do not mean to make heroes of pick-pockets and swindlers, forgers and housebreakers; but I mean to say, that in the very blackest of them there is some good point, some virtues carried to a high pitch—some which, perhaps I might say, are almost peculiar to the hearts of vice. Many a man who risks his life daily to take the money of another will give his own as freely as water to one of his fellows in distress. The tenderness, I have heard, with which some of the most abandoned women in Europe will nurse a sick friend, is quite extraordinary; and

a strong and active feeling for sorrow and distress of every kind, is, I know, very much more common amongst ruffians than amongst the pampered men of pleasure. I can thus very well conceive that this good man, Higgins, might be touched by compassion for the situation of this poor girl, and lay out the plan that he says he has done, thinking it the very best thing for her and for you too, in which, perhaps, he is right."

Lieberg's last words were spoken calmly, deliberately, and thoughtfully; and not the most learned argumentations in favour of licentiousness would have been calculated to produce such a demoralizing effect as the deliberate matter-of-course manner in which he gave them utterance. It at once, in the very fewest possible words, and with the least possible shock, placed before the mind of Morley Ernstein the idea of seducing Helen Barham, and keeping her as a mistress, in the light of something not at all evil, and perhaps right; a thing to be considered, simply in regard to its convenience and expediency, without the slightest reference in the world to the morality or immorality of the transaction. Morley did not reply, but remained with his eyes thoughtfully fixed upon

the floor, meditating over what he had just heard, and asking himself, it must be confessed, whether there is really an absolute right and wrong in such matters, or not. It is the most dangerous question that youth can ask itself, not because it is difficult to answer—not because there should be any doubt or hesitation on the subject. It is because passion not only raises the voice against reason, but is sure to reiterate the same demand a thousand times in every life, and often—too often, waits for no reply.

"You must see your way in the business clearly, Ernstein," continued his friend, "and make very sure that you are not deceived in the girl's character; but I am inclined to think with you, that she is what she appears. However, one or two interviews will easily enable you to ascertain the fact. Art never yet looked so like nature as to deceive an eye sharpened by doubt and in a reasonable head."

"I shall most likely never see her again," replied Morley, "and therefore shall have small opportunity of judging."

"Indeed!—and why not?" demanded Lieberg.

"Simply because I think it dangerous," re-

plied Morley. "She is very beautiful, very graceful, very charming. With such a brother it would be quite beyond my most romantic ideas to make her my wife; and as to the other sort of connexion which you speak of, I can conceive a man being betrayed into it by accident, or rather by a combination of unfortunate circumstances, but could never dream, for my own part at least, of sitting down deliberately to plan such a thing. It does not enter into my scheme of life, Lieberg."

Lieberg laughed.

"I know that I am not without strong passions," continued Morley, "as well as you do. When I love, it will be vehemently, ardently; and whatever may be her fortune or station, I will make that woman my wife if she will become so. It is for this very reason that I do not choose to run the risk of falling in love with any one that I would not choose to marry. I shall therefore take care not to visit such dangerous precincts again."

"Well, if you don't, Ernstein," said Lieberg, "I think I shall."

Morley was mortified. "Perhaps, Lieberg," he replied, "if you do go, you may not find the opportunity that you expect."

"Nay, nay," answered Lieberg, laughing again; "you have no right to excite one's compassion for this fair orphan, and then, with a resolution to abandon her yourself, prevent any other generous man from shewing her his sympathy."

"You mistake me," replied Morley, gravely. "I do not intend to abandon her myself."

"Why, you said you never intended to see her again!" exclaimed Lieberg, with surprise.

"I did," replied Morley; "but I intend also, Lieberg, the moment I quit your house to go to that of my worthy friend, Mr. Hamilton, to tell him this young lady's story; to beg him, with that prompt benevolence for which he is famous, to investigate the whole circumstances, and on my part to do whatever may be necessary to enable Miss Barham to extricate herself from the situation in which she is placed. I feel myself lucky in knowing such a man; his years and character enable him to do what I could not do, and I can trust at once to his wisdom and to his zealous benevolence."

"You are quite right, Morley," answered Lieberg. "You are acting generously and well—not perhaps so well for the girl's happiness as if you had followed the other plan—but at all

events, using self-denial that will do you good, and neither doing yourself nor making her do anything that is irretrievable. Heaven forbid that I should interfere for a moment to spoil such a scheme! Every man in life must calculate which he thinks will procure him the greatest sum of happiness, keen joys or calm pleasures. One man will argue that the joys—which undoubtedly are the brighter of the two commodities—are only followed by those counterbalancing griefs which moralists tell us of, in consequence of man's subserviency to various foolish prejudices and unjust regulations in his artificial state of being. Others again may contend that calm pleasures, though not so brilliant, are more durable; that they are extended over a greater space; that if a man obtains many joys and shakes off many griefs by throwing from him the prejudices of society, on the other hand, the very struggle with those prejudices is in itself an annoyance equal to the endurance of them all. I have never calculated the matter very nicely myself, but I recollect once going to see a fair cousin of mine who, when I went in, was in the act of giving two of her sons some jelly, or jam, or something of that kind. The one boy spread it thinly over a large piece of

bread and butter; the other ate it plain all at once; my cousin, who was a very wise girl as well as a pretty one, let each do as he liked; and I, who stood by and watched, thought that it was a good picture and a good lesson of life."

"You mean," said Morley, "that the one boy was the image of the man who chooses the calmer pleasures spread over the greater space; the other, the representation of him who gives himself up to the brighter, but the briefer joys of life?"

"And my cousin's conduct," replied Lieberg, "gave me the lesson of letting every man do as he likes, and eat his bread and butter as he pleases. Thus, my dear Morley, I say to you; make up your mind upon the matter, and do as you think fit, though from all I have seen of you, I should suspect that there never was a man in this world more inclined by nature to eat his jam plain."

Morley laughed, and Lieberg added, "At all events, I will not meddle with your plans. I would not for the world, now I hear that you are really going to do something to assist the poor girl; my own views were very indefinite when I spoke of seeing her myself. My general purpose was merely to free her from her present

situation, in whatever way seemed to me best suited to her own inclinations. However, I leave the matter in your hands; and now to return to this business of Neville and Stallfed. When the lesser of the two scoundrels comes to me, I suppose I am to say that you refuse all apology."

"Except such as can be conveyed by a horsewhip," replied Morley.

"Nay, nay," said Lieberg, "we will not deal in such figures of speech. I am to name a place and a time, of course?"

"The earliest possible," answered Morley. "I do not like such things hanging over me."

"To-morrow morning, then," said Lieberg. "Primrose-hill, half-past five, a pair of my friend Joe's best, with all the improvements, and we will soon settle Mr. Neville."

CHAPTER XI.

"Is Mr. Hamilton gone into the city yet?" demanded Ernstein, as the door was opened to him by a servant who knew him well.

"No, Sir Morley," replied the man, with a look which well might be the harbinger of bad tidings. "Have you not heard, then, that my master was taken very ill in the middle of the night, and we were obliged to send for Doctor Warren?"

"No, indeed," answered Morley; "and I am extremely sorry to hear it. What is the matter, pray?"

There has not been for many years a servant in England who rightly knew what ailed his master or mistress; whether from a general indifference to sickness and discomfort in others,

or from that want of sympathy between the two classes, which, under the fostering care of what we call political institutions, is daily growing up amongst us, I cannot tell. In former times, the good old blue-bottle—the faithful serving man, in country or in town, who—very often born on the estates of the master whom he served—never changed his place during the course of a long life, but went on respected, from one station in the household to another, till, very likely, loaded with years, he died in the arms of the grandson of him whom he first served —he had a personal interest in each sensation of his master, and watched the looks and words of the physician, to catch his augury of good or evil. Now, however, when every kitchen in the land is more or less a debating society, all such individual interests are merged into considerations of the public weal; and the cosmopolite lackey changes his place every two years to see the world, with a trembling apprehension lest the progress of time should produce such a foolish feeling as attachment towards a master.

The servant of Mr. Hamilton, though a very respectable man, and a good servant, as the world of London goes—that is to say, some four or five shades better than an American help—

had not the slightest idea of what was the matter with his master, having only the disagreeable impression on his mind that he, amongst other servants, had been called up in the night, and had lost some four or five hours of rest.

"Is Mrs. Hamilton visible?" demanded Morley, finding that no further information was to be obtained from the man

"I dare say she is to you, sir," replied the servant; "though she bade me not admit any one."

"Send up, and ask," said Morley; and the butler at the same moment appearing, declared that, of course, his mistress would see Sir Morley Ernstein.

That young gentleman was accordingly shewn into the drawing-room, and Mrs. Hamilton soon after joining him there, gave him the unpleasant tidings that his worthy guardian had been attacked by inflammation of the lungs during the preceding night, and was in a state of imminent danger. Morley was seriously grieved; for, having long been deprived of his own father, he looked upon that gentleman in the light of a parent. He felt also that his loss at the present moment might be far more disastrous to

him than the death of his own father had proved many years before. Perfect quiet and tranquillity were, of course, necessary to the invalid, and Morley did not press to see him, though he felt an eager wish to do so; but turned his steps back towards Berkeley-square, meditating and sad, with a shadow cast across the bright thoughts of youth, like that flung upon the gay spring world by the passing cloud of an April sky.

On entering his own apartments in the hotel, a waiter followed him, saying, with that sharp, quick tone peculiar to waiters, who always speak as if there was, not a drawn sword, but a ringing bell hanging over their heads — "Beg pardon, sir—forgot to tell you a young gentleman called upon you last night, named Barham —eight o'clock. Your servant out also—beg pardon, sir—note came this morning—somehow left down stairs till you were gone."

Morley took the note; it was small, neat, well folded, addressed, in a fine sort of a gossamer hand—"An invitation to dinner," he thought; but when he opened it, the length at once shewed him he was mistaken.

"How to excuse myself to you, sir, I know not," it ran; "how even to exculpate myself

in my own eyes, for venturing to address a gentleman almost a stranger to me, with the request that I am about to make. The only palliation for such conduct is, that in the short moment during which I saw you, you shewed yourself generous and considerate, and that you yourself expressed an interest, which could but spring from noble benevolence, in the wretched boy who has ruined himself, and is now striving to drag his sister down with him. After you were gone, and the base man who has helped to destroy him had taken his departure, I was made acquainted with the terrible secret of his situation. It is so awful, it is so agonizing to me, that I have remained all day in a state almost approaching madness, not knowing how to act, torn by contending feelings, with no one to advise me, and with no means of deliverance, abhorring my brother's conduct and views, abhorring the base man that has us in his power, and yet bound, by natural feeling and long affection, to save, at any risk and at any sacrifice, the erring being who is still my brother, but seeing no way of so doing without becoming the victim myself. You said, sir, that you wished to save him, but, alas! he will not let you with his own good will. He

will seek to make you a prey—to extract money from you; but he will not tell you the secret which places him in the power of that horrible man. I am resolved to do so, if I can see you again; and yet I fear, even by making the request that you would come to me, to encounter, as perhaps I may deserve, your contempt at the same time as your pity. Whether such be the case or not, I shall always remember, with deep thankfulness, your past conduct, and ever remain your unhappy but grateful servant,

"HELEN BARHAM."

To fly to her at once, to give her every assistance and consolation in his power, to treat her tenderly, kindly, generously, was the first impulse of Morley Ernstein, and he obeyed it. He gave one casual thought as to how he could act most prudently; but Mr. Hamilton's illness had put all his wisely-constructed schemes to flight. He had no one to trust to take counsel with, and though, to say truth, he doubted himself where matters of passion were concerned, but one course presented itself to his mind at the moment; and without waiting for aught else than to put on his hat again, he was in the

street the minute after he had read Helen Barham's letter.

It was some time ere he reached her dwelling, and he thus might have had plenty of space for forethought and deliberation; but men of a vehement temperament like himself, when approaching any particular object, occupy the time, by corporeal efforts to get forward, which they might employ in thoughts that would much more facilitate their after progress. Morley was upon foot, and he strode on so rapidly, as nearly to overturn half a dozen people in his way—sometimes having to stop to apologize for his rudeness, sometimes half inclined to pause, and punish some of those who made impertinent observations on his haste—while all the cool considerations of right and propriety, with which, during the last week, he had striven to bind himself down, were now totally forgotten in the sole object of aiding the fair girl who was thus cast upon him for assistance.

If he was eager in the business at the first reading of the letter, he had worked himself into more eagerness before he reached the door, and it was only after the servant had said that her mistress was at home, and his step was upon the stairs, that he began to think

of calming even his demeanour. He had but little opportunity, however, of doing on those twelve or fifteen feet of stairs, what he had neglected to do during a walk of a mile and a half. He did not give himself more time than was necessary either, for the impetus still carried him on, and he was treading on the maid's heels when she announced him.

Helen Barham had evidently heard his knock, and knew it, for she was standing on the other side of the table watching the opening door, blushing up to the eyes, and looking far more beautiful with nothing round her face but her own rich black hair, than she had done in her walking-dress. She moved not—she spoke not, but remained with her eyes fixed upon him, and the hand that rested on the table trembling with emotion. Morley easily understood that she could not welcome him, and advancing at once towards her, he took her hand in his, saying—"Miss Barham, I fear you have thought me very negligent for not coming earlier, but the people of the hotel stupidly neglected to give me your note till after my return from calling upon two friends."

"Oh, no!" she said, in a trembling and agitated voice; "you are only too kind to

come at all. It is better, too, that you did not come earlier, for that wretched boy has only just gone out, and I believe he would kill me if he knew that I betrayed his secret to any one."

"He need not fear your telling it to me," replied Morley; "for, depend upon it, I will only use it for his own advantage. Let me know, then, my dear Miss Barham, how I can serve you. Tell me what I can do to deliver you from the terrible situation I saw you placed in yesterday."

"I will, in a moment," she replied; "but I must first recall my thoughts. The very fact of your coming, Sir Morley Ernstein, may well agitate me very much. Since I wrote to you I have scarcely known whether to regret or to be glad that I did so—whether to be sorry or rejoice, that I had not, in my despair, abandoned myself and my unhappy brother to our fate."

"Nay, nay," said Morley, in a soothing tone—"view it in a different light, Miss Barham! Say simply that you saw I was interested in you, that I was inclined to deal differently with you and yours from most other men; that you trusted in my honour and my good feeling, and that you were not deceived."

"I know you are generously inclined," she said—"I am sure you are; but yet I have been thinking, since I wrote, you must despise me for the rashness and the boldness of what I have done; or, at least, that you must fancy it strange I should have no friends, no connexions here to whom I can apply even for advice. Indeed—indeed, it is not my fault! For the nine months before my poor father's death, he was a continual sufferer; we came to London for medical advice, from a distant part of the country, and knowing nobody here, of course made no acquaintances. After his death, I got two pupils for singing, and one to whom I taught drawing. That poor child is dead, and the other two have left London. My brother, alas! has made acquaintances enough, but I have made none."

She spoke in a tone of deep sadness, and her eyes rested fixed upon the ground, but without tears. Morley was deeply touched, and soothed her with every assurance of sympathy. He took her hand in his, as he sat beside her; he besought her to trust in him fully and entirely, promising, with all his own impetuosity, but in sincerity and truth, to do all for her that man could do for a sister.

"If it be possible, dear Miss Barham," he said, "I will save your brother; but at all events, it is possible to save you from the infamous person into whose hands he would cast you. That, at least, you must allow me to do. But now, tell me at once your brother's situation, and let us consider together what can best be done to disentangle him, which will apparently be the best means of serving you."

"Oh, that I will!" she exclaimed, gently withdrawing her hand from his, in which he had detained it perhaps an instant longer than he himself thought right; and she then proceeded to explain to him more fully what had taken place after he left her the day before. It was a terribly difficult task for her. She had to allude to, if not to speak of, so much that was wounding to all her feelings; she had to shew to a young, handsome, and distinguished man, that, unless means could be found for delivering her brother from the power of the low-born swindler whom he had seen there the day before, she must either abandon herself to that base man, or see her brother perish by an ignominious death. She had deliberately to poise and dwell upon the idea of becoming that man's mistress, or of destroying her own brother, and that to

the ears of one of another sex, and a higher station than herself; and yet she did it well, at least as far as it was possible so to do. She often turned, and paused, and hesitated, and the tears came up in her eyes, and her voice frequently refused to obey her will, and she told the whole in half sentences, leaving imagination to fill up that which she dared not speak.

Thus did Morley Ernstein pass the most dangerous hour that he had ever yet been subjected to in life. The poor girl's secret, however, was told at length, and he found that her brother had committed a forgery to the amount of five hundred pounds; that the note which he had signed with a name not his own, was to pass through the hands of the man Neville, before it was presented for payment, and that William Barham himself did not know where it was, who possessed it, or any means that could be employed to stop it, till it reached the fiend to whom he had sold himself.

By the time that Helen Barham had done, Morley Ernstein was nearly as much agitated as herself, and the sympathies that were established between those two, as they sat there together—the deep, the strong, the thrilling sympathies, the feelings speaking from heart to

heart, and answering each other; the admiration, the tenderness, the compassion, on one side—the admiration, the anguish, the gratitude, on the other, were as perilous a host as ever forced their way into the bosom of man and woman. The interest that Morley took in her, the anxiety that he felt to serve her; the apprehension for herself and for her brother, which her history excited, were all open to the eyes of Helen Barham, and were all in return powerful upon her spirit. At that moment, when, trembling, agitated, tearful, breathless, she concluded the sad tale with that one terrible truth, and when he, listening with quivering lips and eyes straining upon her bright face, heard the dark conclusion of the whole, which seemed to leave no course for him, no hope for her, but to snatch her at once from her unworthy brother, one rash impulse, two rash words, "Be mine!" would have sealed the fates of both for ever. Had he uttered them, she could but have cast herself upon his breast, or died.

Oh, it is sad to feel that there is but one thing on earth to which we can cling, and yet not dare to cling to it! Oh, it is sad to feel within ourselves the power to cherish and to comfort, and yet not dare to use it! Those words, "Be

mine," presented themselves to Morley's mind, rose up in his heart, trembled upon his lips; but as the destinies of men and states have ever depended upon accident, one instant's pause saved him and Helen Barham; whether permanently, or only for the time, those who read will learn. "Shall I say it?" he asked himself; and while his heart beat like an imprisoned eagle against the bars of its cage, his eyes turned towards the table and rested there for a moment. There was a book upon it, which she had evidently been reading before he came in, open, and turned upon its face. There was a word stamped upon the back, and Morley's glance passed over it—it was, Prayer!

In a moment lightning-like thought had passed round the whole range of the mental horizon.

"She has been praying," he thought—"praying to that God, who made her beautiful, and innocent, and bright—praying for help against the infernal powers of wickedness and evil, that seem to surround her; and shall I, the only help that he has sent her, shall I sully her brightness, destroy her innocence, and blister that fair brow with the name of harlot? God forbid!"

The ethereal spirit within him was triumphant in a moment, the hour of the animal spirit was over.

"Prayer!" he said, aloud—"prayer!" and rising from his seat, he took her hand tenderly and respectfully, and pressed it to his lips. "Here, Miss Barham," he said, laying his hand upon the book, "is the true means of comfort and consolation. He only to whom the words in this book are addressed, can certainly give you deliverance. I, however, as an instrument in his hands, will do my very best to help you; and whatever my fortune or my influence can effect, shall not be wanting, and what cannot fortune and influence do in this or any other land!"

He paused, and cast his eyes thoughtfully upon the ground; and she answered simply, as if she had been speaking her thoughts to an old and dear friend—"I was praying before you came in; and though my mind was somewhat confused, I felt comforted and relieved. I felt as if my heart told me, that God would send somebody to help me—I think he sent you."

"May it prove so, dear lady," said Morley; "I trust it will prove so. You have put your confidence in one, who, though, in some re-

spects, a strange, wayward young man, will try what he can do to merit it. First let me tell you, however," he continued, seeing a slight blush come up in Helen Barham's cheek, at the thought of having put her trust in *a strange, wayward young man*—"let me tell you what I have done in this business since I saw you yesterday, for you have not been absent from my thoughts. In the first place, the person who brought me the ear-rings saw me again last night, and gave me an intimation that this man Neville must have some extraordinary hold upon your brother, probably by a fault or crime which he has seduced him to commit. He also explained to me partially the conduct and views of your brother towards yourself. For the purpose of aiding you as far as possible, I offered him a sum of money if he would ascertain what was the nature of this man's power over your brother, and he promised me to obtain the information quickly. Considering the matter further, however, I thought that it might be necessary to remove you at once from the influence of one who, however near akin, is most dangerous to you, and to place you under the care of some one who would protect you against Neville and your brother, and at the same time,

guard you against all the evils of straitened circumstances."

Helen Barham cast down her look upon the ground, and the red blood crept up into her forehead; she then turned her eyes rapidly to the book of Prayer, and raised them to Morley's countenance with an inquiring glance. He understood it all as well as if she had spoken a volume.

"Nay, my dear Miss Barham," he said; "do not misunderstand me; though passion may often lead me to do what is wrong, I am not the cool, deliberate villain to lay out a regular scheme for the ruin of any one. Your youth, your beauty, your unfriended situation altogether," he continued, while the blush grew deeper and deeper on her cheek, "all made me think that it would be better some man of advanced years and high reputation—some man whose very character would be the noblest shield for yours, should act in this business rather than myself; and one of my visits this morning, ere I received your note, was to the Honourable Mr. Hamilton, the great banker, who was my guardian in times past, and has ever acted as a second father to me. I intended to tell him the whole case, and to beg him to do what I could not, or ought not

to do—to remove you from this house altogether, and to use every nerve to deliver your brother, but to put you quite out of his power, both in respect of pecuniary affairs and moral influence. Unfortunately, I found Mr. Hamilton had been seized only last night with a dangerous disease. Mrs. Hamilton, though an excellent person, is very different in heart and mind from her husband; thus the whole scheme is deranged for the present. We must therefore do the best that we can, as no time is to be lost, however painful it may be to you to depend solely upon the assistance and efforts of a young man like myself."

"Oh, no!" she cried, interrupting him eagerly, and laying her hand upon his arm, while she looked up in his face with a bright smile of confidence, that repaid him well for all that he had said and done. "Oh, no!" she cried; "it is not painful to me. I could trust anything to you, after your conduct to-day—my life, my honour, anything! Oh, no! it is not painful to me;" and bending down her face upon her two hands, she wept for a minute, with one of those bursts of emotion in which joy and sorrow are strangely, but perhaps we may say sweetly, blended together. Morley soothed her, but she wiped away the tears in a few moments,

and said—"Do not mind, it is only agitation, not grief. What were you going to say?"

"Merely this," replied Morley; "we have but one course to pursue, my dear Miss Barham, for the present. It is this—to discover, if possible, who is the person whose name your brother has thus forged. You must try to wring it from him, and, that being once obtained, I will endeavour, to the utmost of my power, and by all the means at my command, to make the person, whoever it is, abandon the thought of proceeding against him."

"But whoever it is will never consent to save a criminal by paying so large a sum," said Helen Barham.

"I will do that," replied Morley; and before he could prevent her, she caught his hand, and pressed her lips on it.

"God bless you!" she cried, "and return it to you a thousandfold, in treasures uncountable!—But, alas! I fear," she continued, after a thoughtful pause, "I shall never induce William to give me the name."

"Try, at all events," replied Morley. "I will endeavour, through the man who seems his confidant. If we fail by all other means, we must come openly to himself, show him his danger, prove to him that, as your resolution is taken,

nothing can save him but confession, and offer to do everything for him if he will but be candid. But, indeed, my dear Miss Barham, before that time, you ought to be removed from him entirely, and put in safety and at ease. You say you have no friends in London; have you any in the country, with whom you could be?"

"But few," she replied, with a sigh. "Who loves to be burdened with the unfortunate? My father's parish was extensive, but poor; containing no gentry of any kind. There were several large and respectable farmers in it, and their wives were, in many cases, excellent women; some of them loved me well enough, I believe; but I could hardly ask any of them to receive me. My father, too, was retired in his habits, and made few acquaintances. There was the wife of a neighbouring clergyman, indeed, who was almost the only person near of the same station as ourselves; he is dead, but she lives in the village still, and, perhaps, might be willing to have me with her; but I could do nothing there to earn my own livelihood, and I would not be a burden to her, or to any one. Besides, I wrote to her a week or two ago, and have not heard from her since."

"Your stay need only be for a few weeks,"

repled Morley. "Ere long, I trust, Mr. Hamilton will be quite well; I will place your affairs in his hands, Miss Barham, and then the matter will soon be settled. It is only for the present that I do not know what to do for you. I think it absolutely necessary that, for a time, even on his own account, your brother should be cut off from all communication with you, if he will not give that information which is necessary to deliver him from the hands of this man, Neville; and yet I myself can suggest no means, no place of refuge, without danger or discredit to you; and, believe me," he added, "I would not, for any consideration, bring upon you either."

"Indeed, I do believe you!" she said, looking brightly up in his face; "but, oh, sir! you seem to fix your whole hopes and expectation upon Mr. Hamilton's recovery. Are you very sure that, if he were well to-morrow, he would feel in this matter as you do—that he would judge as you do? The old see things very differently from the young; the heart gets cased by experience, if not hardened—and judgment is a sterner person to deal with than feeling. I recollect one of my young pupils wanted to persuade her mother to take me with them into the country, because I looked sad at

their going—as well I might. The mother explained to her kindly, that it would never do; and I could not but own that she was right; and yet I loved the daughter better than the mother."

She blushed immediately she had uttered those words, seeing that they might have an application which she did not intend; but Morley was too much a gentleman in heart, to give to any words a meaning different from their real one; for there are some things which we understand with our heart rather than with our head; and the meaning of those we speak with is read by the spirit within ourselves, whatever may be the mere sounds that address themselves to the ear. "What I mean," continued Miss Barham, "is only, you must not be disappointed if you find that Mr. Hamilton does not quite approve of all you have done, and does not encourage, or assist you in doing all that you would be willing to do. Nor can any one say that he is wrong, for indeed, Sir Morley Ernstein, I cannot but feel that you have already done more than the calm judgment of any man of the world would approve."

Morley smiled. "You do not know Mr. Hamilton," he said; "he is as young in heart

as I am, though old in experience, and mature in judgment. He is one of those few, Miss Barham, in whose enthusiasms I can trust."

"I doubt not," replied Miss Barham, "that he will take a kind interest in me, on your account; that he will give me countenance and protection, and ensure me the means of obtaining my own living respectably. That is all I can desire, or expect. Most grateful to him shall I be; but he can never do for me what you have done—raise me up from the depth of sorrow and despair; comfort, support, protect me—and all with honour and consideration, without one selfish or ungenerous feeling, —without one evil thought mingling with your benevolence to make me blush at the pity I excited, or the assistance I received."

It was Morley who blushed now, for he felt that though he had been generous, he had not been altogether so generous as she supposed. He felt that the passions which man encourages, and thinks no evil, though subdued and kept down, might have had their share; and that those feelings had been there which we will not believe have power to sully till we place our own heart in contrast with something brighter than itself. He coloured, as we have said, and

was somewhat confused; and, after promising to see her again on the following morning, and beseeching her to use every means to wring the required information from her brother, he left her, and returned thoughtfully to his temporary home.

CHAPTER XII.

THE table was covered with notes, but they were all insignificant, and Morley glanced over them with an eye which shewed how abstracted the mind was, and how busy with other topics. He had thrown the last down, and, with his hand still resting on the table, was gazing forth into vacancy, when the door of the room opened, and Lieberg entered, with his usual gentlemanly, but impressive manner.

"Well, Morley," he said, "I have arranged it all for you, as was proposed; these two men, Stallfed and Neville, had evidently heard all about you, so far as your being wealthy, young, and unacquainted with London; and they proposed to make a very pleasant speculation of Neville's quarrel with you, and share some five

hundred pounds between them, or perhaps more; but the fact of your referring them to me, instead of some of your college companions, as they expected, has sadly disappointed them."

"Why, how could they calculate so wildly?" exclaimed Morley. "They could never imagine that I was to be frightened into paying them money for the privilege of not fighting?"

"Oh, no, no!" answered Lieberg; "that was not the way, at all. The way it was to be arranged was this, Stallfed was to treat you in the most gentlemanly manner, and no one can assume the tone of a high-bred gentleman better than he can, when he likes it. The slightest apology on your part was to be accepted; the Captain was to be smitten with high admiration of your gentlemanly bearing, and bold demeanour. You were to be invited to dinner, accommodated with champagne, and claret, perhaps a little laudanum, or some other exhilarating fluid; cards and dice were to be at your service—and the result was to be, the enriching of themselves, and the pillaging of you."

"Why, how did you discover all this?" said Morley. "You certainly have some extraordinary way of getting at people's secrets!"

"Not at all," replied Lieberg—"not at all; it is pure intuition, Ernstein. I know the whole thing, as well as if it had been done and I had seen it. This man, Neville, I have long known, to the very innermost corners of his dark mind. He won two hundred pounds of me at Ascot, last year, with such barefaced cheatery, that he himself did not expect me to pay the money——"

"But did you pay it?" exclaimed Ernstein, in some surprise.

"To be sure!" answered Lieberg. "Was it not well worth two hundred pounds to keep one's name out of the newspaper, in connexion with that of a blackleg? The very reputation of having over-reached Colonel Lieberg, was as much to him as winning another great battle would be to the Duke of Wellington. The consequence was, that I pretended to be looking another way and very busy about other business, paid the money as fast as ever I could, for fear the whole affair should be exposed by other people who had bets, and got off the course before the thing was inquired into, leaving Hartley, of the Third, to horsewhip Neville, and have his name in the "Times," coupled with an action of battery. However, Ernstein, my

simple reply to the worthy Captain, was, that you were quite prepared to give Mr. Neville satisfaction; that your place was Chalk Farm, your hour half-past five, and that we set our watches by the Horse-Guards. If Neville comes to the ground, I am very much mistaken; though Stallfed has one virtue—namely, courage, and will bring him if possible. I will call for you at a quarter after five to-morrow, and roll you up to the place. What do you intend to do, if the fellow does come? I know you have odd notions about these sort of things."

"Shoot him!" replied Morley, vehemently. "Shoot him, as I would a mad dog, and upon the same principle. I am not a man to miss what I fire at, Lieberg, let it be living or dead; and if he calculates that I am too humane to kill a viper like him, who is spreading poison and destroying wherever he goes, he is very much mistaken."

"I think you are quite right, Ernstein," replied Lieberg. "For my own part, I do not see any use of going out to fight a man, unless one fires at him; it is very silly work to stand up to be shot at, and then to waste a certain portion of good powder by firing in the air."

"But there are some circumstances," said

Morley, "when a man could not fire at another —after having done him a great injury, for instance."

"I know none," replied Lieberg, drily. "The man who calls out another with any reason to believe that his adversary will not fire at him, must be somewhat of a coward, and deserves to be shot for his pains. Oh, no; child's play does not become reasonable men! Of course, I never interfere with what a friend chooses to do in such cases. But I think you are quite right; and in shooting Neville, you will be doing a benefit to society; in reward for which, there ought to be a general subscription, to present you with a very handsome pair of long barrels. Mind you don't miss him—don't take him too fine!—I am going to see that great picture of Reubens'," he continued, in his usual easy tone —"will you come? He is a magnificent painter—Reubens; and yet I hate his pictures —it always seems to me as if he had skinned all his men, and pinched all his women. Many of them are certainly very natural, but it is a fat and undignified nature, too. Was there ever anything like that St. Peter at Cologne? How the saint is roaring in his unpleasant position! One seems to hear the very cries of

agony coming from his mouth; and yet it does not give us a very elevated idea of the saint—to see him with his head downwards, bellowing, like a cross man with the gout. Will you come?"

Morley, however, declined; he had much to think of; and after Lieberg had left him, he sat for a long time, revolving in his own mind the situation of Helen Barham, but endeavouring in vain to arrange some plan to place her in a less dangerous situation, till Mr. Hamilton was well enough to give him counsel and assistance. He thought of her much—he thought of her long—of her beauty, of her grace, of a certain wild, sparkling manner, very different from the demeanour of the young lady of the fashionable society, but very winning withal, and very charming. Pity mingled with the train of reflection, and softened admiration into tenderness; at the same time, there was a sort of consciousness that she was entirely in his power—that she was the creature of his will, not by any tie of mere circumstance, but by the tie of gratitude and admiration. The better spirit, however, as we have said, had gained the triumph; and though passion might urge, and vanity prompt, it was all in vain—Morley did not yield for a moment, but went on in high

speculations on the destinies of human beings —of the strange, and, apparently, wayward turns of fate—and of that far, but sublime period when the ways of God will be justified, even to the eyes of his creatures, when those who have suffered, and yet believe, will rejoice, and those who have doubted and rebelled, will be covered with confusion, on finding that all is bright, and good, and excellent in the scheme of Divine wisdom.

The spirit of the soul, as I have called it, exerted her sway during that hour with calm, but mighty power. He dwelt upon many a curious question with himself, both general and referring to the chief matter of the day, and although the idea of marrying Helen Barham, and thus freeing her from all her difficulties, never entered into his mind as a thing that could take place, because he could not dream of allying himself to one so base as her brother was proved to be, yet he asked himself, had circumstances been different, would he have offered her his hand? The answer was—"No—she was not the being he would have chosen." And why was she not so? became the next question. Could any one be more lovely?— could any style of beauty whatsoever be more fit to excite ardent passion? Had he a doubt of her virtue? of her

simplicity, or truth? No, no, no! He could not tell why. He did not, or he would not, investigate why he felt that, although, had he given way to the temptation of circumstances, and the strong inclination of his own heart, he might have made Helen Barham his mistress—he would not choose her for his wife. Let not the reader suppose that it was any evil in her character, anything that betrayed itself therein, and which he felt, though he could not define it. No; she was all that she seemed—pure, bright, generous-hearted, tender, devoted, not without some faults, but those such as would little affect domestic peace. No! it was nothing in her character, but it was something in his heart. Reader! it was a memory!

Great part of the men and women that are cast by the will of God into the world, go about seeking a mere match of some kind. For most of them, if not exactly anything, very nearly anything will do. It matters not what is the first thing that links their affections to another, whether beauty, or similar thoughts, or similar tastes, or circumstances, or proprieties, or follies, or accidents; one or two slight causes combining is sufficient to produce the effect; the words are spoken, the altar gives its sanction,

the ring encircles the finger, the white ribbons and the orange blossom, the smiles and gaiety, are worn and pass away, and the union settles down into tranquil happiness, continual irritation, fierce strife, or speedy rupture, as the temper, the passions, and the principles of the parties impel or bind them. But there are others, however, of a finer clay, and a higher mould, who form, at a very early period, a bright ideal image of the being that must be their soul's companion, in which every trait and feature is made harmonious, (to use boldly a mixed figure,) to the pre-existing tones of their own heart; where each taste, each feeling, each thought, finds a responsive note in the spirit of another, and where the corporeal form represents but as a symbol, that grand quintessence of all that we desire in the heart of the being that we love. Seldom, very seldom does it happen in life, that those who have thus, if I may so call it, preconceived their love, ever find the being they have dreamt of. Seldom, if they do find her, is it their fate to win her; but if they do, they may well die the day after, for they have known enough of human joy to fill up a whole existence. Seldom do they find her; they may find the face and the form, but

the one harmonious whole is rare—oh, how rare! The mines of Golconda do not furnish fewer diamonds, the river of Ceylon roll down fewer rubies, than the whole world produces, ay, in a thousand years, of beings fully worthy to be loved.

Morley Ernstein was one of those who had formed for himself the picture of her who was to be his; and, as we have shewn the reader, he had once seen the face of his visions. Whether the mind was there he knew not, but that face was ever present to his memory, and it was not that of Helen Barham. Bright, and beautiful, and sunny as she was, he might feel passion towards her, pity, tenderness, esteem—but no, not love! There was a something wanting still; I cannot well tell what, and will not seek to do so, for love is like one of those fine elixirs, which some skilful and life-restoring hands have formed, and which we may analyze as we will, separating the parts with every scientific aid, but still something escapes, which we cannot discover, something which gives virtue and efficacy to the whole.

The thoughts of Morley Ernstein strayed naturally and by imperceptible steps from Helen Barham back to that fair young being whom he had seen once, and only once in life. The

idea brought back the thoughts and feelings of the day when he had met her, so short a time before, and yet seeming far, far away in the past; so many had been the fresh incidents which had crowded into that brief period of his career. There was a sweet and soothing pleasure in the very remembrance. There always is, in the memory of first love; it is like the memory of our early home. A first love is surely the early home of the heart. It came upon him so pleasantly, with such tranquillizing influence, with such balmy power, that he resolved, as soon as he could disentangle himself from the affairs which now pressed upon him, he would return to his own old hall; to his own park, and its shady trees; to the sweet singing of the summer birds, the smoke of the peasant's cottage, the village church, the cheerful upland, and all that made the bright picture to memory of the native place he had left behind.

Suddenly, however, the questions broke upon him—how should he return to it? and should he ever be able to enjoy, as he had enjoyed it—to taste the same pleasures with the same zest? Had he not passed by the moment of such delights? Had he not known, and felt, and lived, beyond the hour of such calm happiness?

Then imagination went on to the work laid out for the following day; to the act that he was about to commit; to the bringing of blood upon his hand; to the slaying of a fellow-creature; to the imprinting on the irrevocable roll of deeds done, the dark word—"Death!"

He started away from his own thoughts; his mind was made up and fixed; his determination had been announced, and he resolved that he would think upon the matter no more. He would amuse his thoughts; he would mingle with the crowded world; he would go to the party to which he was invited that night, and do the deed he had purposed to do, as a mere matter of course; and yet there was one thing which he had to consider, and which, till late on that day, he did not consider at all—namely, that he might himself fall in the encounter. He did not think it likely, but such an event might take place. Neville was a coward, evidently well known to be so; but the most notorious cowards, aided by accident, and the cat-in-a-corner courage of despair, have been known to shoot men of duelling reputation. He might fall, then, and at all events it was necessary to make some preparation for such a result. He sat down accordingly, pen in hand, to draw up a little

memorandum of his last wishes; and although, as I have already said, his property was originally very large, and had been increased greatly by the care of Mr. Hamilton, his will was soon made, and compressed in a few lines.

He left his two former guardians his executors; explained very briefly his knowledge of Helen Barham, her circumstances, and the bad conduct of her brother. He besought Mr. Hamilton to act entirely as her guardian, knowing that, with him, that would be only another name for acting as her father, and he left her so large a portion of the sum accumulated during his minority, as to place her in a state of affluence for life, with one or two thoughtful provisions, to ensure that it should never fall within the grasp of a sharper. His landed property he suffered to take its legal course, which led it, in case of his death, to a very distant branch of his family, none of whom he had seen above two or three times in the course of his life, and whose representatives had satisfied themselves, during his minority, by inquiring tenderly, once or twice in the year, after his health, which had always proved so vigorous as to exclude them from all reasonable hope of entering into possession themselves.

There was still a larger sum to be disposed of, and Morley thought for a moment what he should do with it; for it sometimes so happens, that when thousands are starving, and worse than starving, around, a rich man, caught by the sudden arrest of death, looks about him embarrassed for some object on which to bestow his wealth. There were several things that Morley had proposed to do; institutions he had dreamt of founding; good deeds of various kinds which he had thought to perform; but, alas! of all the many things that are killed by delay, none are so easily slaughtered as those same good deeds. Morley found now that there was no time to make such arrangements as he had proposed, with that precision and circumlocution which the law of England requires, as if for the express purpose of embarrassing a man's mind at a period when his mind is rarely very clear, and wasting his time, when time is too seldom very abundant. He therefore contented himself with leaving the great bulk of his funded property to Mr. Hamilton, for the purpose of being distributed amongst such persons as that gentleman should find most necessitous and deserving, in the course of the next three years. From this, indeed, he reserved

a few small sums for annuities to his servants, and for remembrances to one or two of his college friends. To Lieberg he left some fine pictures; and an impulse that he could not resist, made him bequeath some diamonds which had been his mother's, as a token of gratitude to Juliet Carr.

"Mr. Hamilton will smile," he thought, "if he have occasion to open this will, and may well smile, if he should ever know that Helen Barham I have seen twice, Juliet Carr perhaps once—perhaps not at all;" and leaning his head on his hand, he began again to think of the scene which had taken place in the road under his own park wall, and of the beautiful being he had there beheld, upon whom his imagination had fixed a name which might very well belong to some one else.

There are strange things told of presentiment; there are a thousand recorded instances of men firmly and clearly anticipating the death that awaited them, often when there was no reasonable cause for expecting it. But we may go further still. Who is there that, without any distinct motive that he can perceive, has not often found his thoughts resting strongly upon some particular theme, very loosely related,

if at all, to the circumstances around him, and returning, whether he would or not, to that one topic, his mind seemingly impelled to its consideration by an irresistible power out of himself, and then, ere many hours were over, has found the things connected with that theme rise up around him as if by magic? Who is there that has not had occasion to say to himself in life—"My thoughts were prophetic?" Who is there that has not more than once in life almost fancied himself endowed with the second sight?

Morley Ernstein dined, dressed himself, and went out to a party, which had been announced to him, by the lady who gave the invitation, as a small and an early one. Perhaps of all others this was the kind of society that he would not have chosen on that occasion. He would rather have been in the midst of a gay world of sights and sounds, each appealing strongly to imagination for a moment, and changing again ere the mind could get weary. But the lady who had asked him had some claims upon him; she was an old friend of his mother's; had been kind and affectionate to him in his youth; was of a very amiable character, though somewhat eccentric in her enthusiasms and her self-

devotion; and thus, as he knew she counted much upon his presence that night, he would rather have disappointed any person in London than Lady Malcolm. He accordingly proceeded to her house not very long after the hour she had named; but there was already a number of people in the rooms, almost all of them belonging to the best society in London, but deviating from their usual late habits to please a person universally respected and liked.

Lady Malcolm herself, always lady-like, notwithstanding some touches of eccentricity, was in the small outer room, receiving and talking to a group of gentlemen who had entered not long before Morley himself. She greeted her young friend gladly, and then added, with a marked smile—"If you go on, Sir Morley, you will find an acquaintance in those other rooms."

As she said this, she turned to speak again with the other party, and Morley advanced into a larger chamber beyond, where a number of gentlemen and ladies were collected, talking of everything and nothing upon the face of the earth. As the room, however, was not very large, neither of the three being at all upon a grand scale, Morley's entrance caused some little sensation, for, as we have before said, his

appearance was distinguished, his countenance handsome, the expression not ordinary, and his whole carriage that of a very high-bred gentleman. The first persons who saw him, asked others who stood near, who he was, and it soon spread through the whole, that he was the rich young Baronet who had lately come of age. Those who were acquainted with him, approached eagerly to speak with him, and several others asked to be introduced.

In the demeanour of a man pre-occupied with any grave and powerful feelings, there is generally a tone of cold firmness, which is impressive to the indifferent and the light-hearted, and Morley, at that moment, was too full of the thoughts of to-morrow to be at all carried away by the light conversation of a party like that. Some called him haughty; some thought him vain; some pronounced him cold; some said he was purse-proud. One or two men of high rank judged more favourably of him, and declared that his bearing was just what it should be; but after suffering himself to be detained for a few minutes, the young gentleman moved on, and entered the third chamber, which concluded the little suite of Lady Malcolm's receiving rooms. He was making his way to-

wards a table covered with drawings, when a sight presented itself, which caused him to stop short, and pause, as if suddenly rooted to the ground. The sight, however, was certainly a pleasant one, for it was that of as beautiful a face as was ever seen, but if it had been that of Venus herself, fresh risen from the sparkling Mediterranean wave, it could not, independent of association, have had the effect upon Morley Ernstein which was produced by that fair countenance.

There—there before him, in the rooms of Lady Malcolm, was the same soft, yet dazzling face; the same deep blue eyes, with their dark lashes; the same clear forehead and fair brow; the same short, chiselled lip, with the rosy mouth half open, in the act of speaking; the same beautiful form, every line of which was contour and symmetry, the same bright being, in short, which he had seen once, and as he believed only once, in life before, when they had stood together for a moment, by her horse's side, in the mellow light of a spring morning. She was conversing with a lady who sat on the sofa beside her, but her eyes were full upon Morley Ernstein; and, on his part, after the first sudden pause of surprise was over, with a

look of bright satisfaction that could not be mistaken, he crossed the room at once, and took her hand in his, as if he had known her twenty years, forgetting altogether, that at that moment he was not even sure of her name.

She smiled upon him kindly, evidently recollecting him well, and not displeased with the recollection. There was a faint blush, too, came up in her face, not like the blush of agitation, indeed, but that sort of sudden transient glow, which comes over a cheek unhackneyed to any strong sensations, upon even a slight emotion. There are few people in the world more to be pitied than women who have lost the power of blushing. With them the bloom has gone off the fruit indeed. She blushed slightly, as I have said, and Morley inquired after her health, and spoke of the time when they had last met, and his eyes sparkled, and his lip became full of expression, and there was eagerness in his whole tone, so that those who had seen him in the other room would hardly have known him now. So much can two steps do to change the whole feelings of the human heart.

Scarcely, however, had he uttered many sentences when the feeling that he had never been introduced to the fair being to whom he was

speaking in so intimate a tone—that he had, in fact, according to the usages of society, no right even to know her, first embarrassed, and then made him smile at his embarrassment, and seeing a vacant seat beside her on the sofa, he took possession of it at once, resolved to wait till Lady Malcolm came into the room, in order that no idle form for the future might stand in the way between them. They spoke of ordinary subjects for a few minutes—that is to say, subjects which any one might talk of to another, though in London society in general people do not do so—of the beauty of the country where they had last met; of the pleasures of the country in general; of the superiority of that which, according to the old adage, God himself made, over that which man made. The lady who sat beside them, either thought their comments very tiresome, or perceived that one of the party might feel it as pleasant if he were left alone with his neighbour, and, contrary to the usual course of human benevolence, she rose, and went away to speak to a dear friend in the doorway.

If she supposed that the conversation of Morley Ernstein and his fair companion would be more free after she was gone, she was very

much mistaken. For the first few minutes, they had both very nearly fallen into absolute silence, though their thoughts were busy. As often happens on such occasions, it was the lady who first spoke.

"I am happy," she said, "to see that you are so completely recovered."

"Then you are Juliet Carr," said Morley, abruptly; "I was sure it was so, from the description of my good old servant, Adam Gray."

"Indeed!" said the young lady, with the warm blood now rushing quick into her glowing cheek—"indeed! The truth is," she added, a moment after, "that in passing by the place where you were lying ill, I heard of the accident that had occurred, and in going near your house, in one of my walks round Yelverley, I thought it best to inform your servants that such was the case, suspecting that they might not know it, as, indeed, they did not."

"And most grateful am I, dear Miss Carr," replied Morley, "for your taking the trouble of letting them know. However much interest you might create in me on our first meeting, I could hardly hope that I had excited any such kind feelings in you, when my rash folly,

in leaping my horse over the park palings, might have killed you, and certainly did alarm you very much."

"Your kindness after it was done," replied Juliet Carr, in a calm tone, "made ample compensation; but," she added, in a lower voice, and with her eyes cast down upon the ground, "that was not the first time that we ever met."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Morley, in his turn surprised, and under the first impulse speaking out the plain truth, without any of the softenings of conventional life—"I did not think it possible, that if I had once seen you on the whole earth before, even for a single moment, I could ever have forgotten you."

His fair companion answered not for a moment, and he added—"Where—where was it, Miss Carr? I do not recollect any one even of your name in our neighbourhood. Where was it?"

"In this very house—in this very room," replied Juliet Carr. "We have played together many a time upon the carpet, and you used to tease me sadly," she added, with a playful look, "when you were eight years old, and I was seven."

"God give me the opportunity of teasing you

again!" exclaimed Morley, with a bright laugh —her words illuminating, in a moment, the whole dark void of the past, like a flash of lightning in a murky night; "and is it possible that you were my little July, my little summer-month, as I used to call you? It is the only name by which I ever knew you; for, indeed, dear Juliet, I was not aware that your name was Carr. Do you recollect"—he added—but ere he could conclude his sentence, the memory of the light, boyish feelings of the past, became mingled so strangely with the intense manly feelings of the present, as to make him almost regret he had begun the question, and caused his voice to tremble as he went on, feeling that he must conclude—"Do you recollect how you promised to be my wife?"

Juliet Carr turned deadly pale, and Morley could scarcely hear her voice, as she replied, "Oh yes, oh yes! I remember something of it."

His heart sunk, for he was inexperienced in matters of love, and thought that, in that paleness, and that low tone, he perceived a thousand things which they did not imply in the least. Such feelings as his, however, are seldom without hope, and he soon rallied again; but he re-

solved, ere he said more upon subjects of so deep an interest, to watch and see, to mark every word and every tone, to gather by some means, in short, the certainty that there was no such bar as another attachment between her heart and his. So far he resolved wisely; but he went on to determine that he would guard his own affections carefully, that he would take care not to fall in love with Juliet Carr till he was certain there was no obstacle to her loving him again. In this he resolved very foolishly, as every man does who takes resolutions in regard to things that are past. Morley Ernstein had no longer any power not to love Juliet Carr. He might guard the posterns of the citadel as he would, —the garrison had already surrendered, and the enemy had entered by the great gates.

Morley might have been somewhat puzzled to renew the conversation, after the momentary pause for thought which suceeeded the last word spoken. It is a great art in that sort of communion which he was holding with Juliet Carr, never to let any subject drop entirely without leaving some sort of link in the chain open to hook it on to another. Morley was relieved from his difficulty, however, though not in the manner which he might have liked the best.

The lady who had been talking with his fair companion when he first saw her that evening, returned, and spoke with her again for a few minutes. What she said Morley did not hear, for he went on thinking upon the subject which, for the time, was predominant in his own mind. After a moment or two, however, he saw Miss Carr's eyes directed towards the man with whom the other lady had been speaking in the doorway, and at the same time a sort of shudder seemed to come over her, while she said, "Can you really admire such conduct?"

The lady made some reply, which Morley did not hear, laughed, with a gay toss of her head, and went away again.

Morley Ernstein was now better prepared to carry on the conversation, for his mind had turned to the past, and to the childish days which he had spent in that house with Juliet Carr. "Am I mistaken in thinking, Miss Carr," he asked, "that you are a niece of Lady Malcolm's? It seems to me, that I recollect having heard such was the case, long ago."

"Oh no," replied Juliet Carr; "our relationship is not so near. My mother was Lady Malcolm's cousin; but you know how generous and high-spirited she is; and since my mother's

death she has always acted towards me more as a mother than anything else—at least, when she has been permitted to do so."

"I really do not see, Miss Carr," replied Morley Ernstein, "the exact connexion between Lady Malcolm's generosity and high spirit, and her affection for you; I should think it very possible to love you dearly, without any great liberality of feeling."

He spoke with a smile, and evidently in a tone of assumed playfulness; but Juliet Carr replied, eagerly—"Oh, indeed! in this case you are mistaken; it needed great kindness and generosity for Lady Malcolm to feel any affection for me at all, as my birth kept her from a considerable property, which, at that time, I have heard, she was much in need of."

"Then, I trust, you are with her now for a long time," said Morley Ernstein.

"I have only leave of absence for three weeks," she answered; and the moment after added, in a low tone, "Thank Heaven, he is gone!"

Morley had remarked that, during the last five minutes, her eyes had turned frequently towards the gentleman who stood in the doorway, and who had now just moved away with a

slight degree of lameness in his walk. There was quite sufficient love in Morley's breast to make him feel an eager—I might almost call it an apprehensive, interest in all Juliet Carr's thoughts, and, with his usual impetuosity, he said at once, "May I know who the gentleman is, Miss Carr, whose departure seems to afford you so much relief?"

"I really do not know," replied Juliet, with a smile, which might, perhaps, be at Morley's impetuous questioning, or perhaps, at her own ignorance of the man's name, for whose absence she had thanked Heaven—"I really do not know," she answered, and then stopped, gazing in his face, with that smile, as if to puzzle him still further. Morley looked down upon the ground, but would ask no further questions; and seeing a sort of determination in his countenance not to do so, Juliet Carr added, in a lower tone, and with a graver look, "I can tell you what he is, though I cannot tell you who."

"What, what?" asked Morley, eagerly.

"He is a duellist!" replied Juliet Carr. "Lady Emily Greenfield came up, just now, to tell me a good deal about him; she says that he killed another man in a duel, a fortnight ago."

There was a look of abhorrence and pain in her beautiful face as she spoke, which brought

some strange sensations into Morley's heart, when he thought of the part he was about to play the next morning; and he replied, "Perhaps he could not help it."

"Could not help it!" exclaimed Juliet Carr, with a look of surprise, and forgetting, in her eagerness, the lapse of thirteen or fourteen years, she added—"Could not help it! Oh, Morley!"

Morley felt as if he could have cast himself at her feet, in gratitude for that one word; but he governed his impetuous nature, and followed out the subject on which they were speaking. "Perhaps," he said, in explanation, "he was grossly insulted by this man whom he shot. Perhaps his adversary called him out, and made him fight."

"But, do you mean to say," asked Juliet Carr, "that there are any circumstances in which a man cannot help deliberately killing another? I myself think, that no man ought to fight a duel at all; but even if he be weak enough to risk his own life for a vain prejudice, he has no right to take that of another. God will ask the blood of his brother at his hand," she added, lifting her beautiful eyes as if towards the heavens; "and though he may smother the voice of conscience, in this world, he must not hope that he will escape punishment in another.

Oh! think what a horrible thing it is to take away that existence which we can never restore; to cut off, in a moment, a fellow-being, from all the warm and sweet relationships of life; to change the living being, instinct with a bright spirit, into a dull mass of inanimate clay, and, worse than all, to put the seal of fate upon the sins, and follies, and crimes, of a fellow-being; to cut him off for ever from repentance, and bring the day of judgment upon his head, without time for thought, or preparation, or hope, or atonement! Oh, no, no! if such a thing had happened to me, I would hide myself from all eyes in the darkest corner of the earth. I would spend my whole life in bitterness and tears. I should never know a moment's peace—I should think I heard the voice of him whom I had murdered, crying for ever in my ears, 'You have not only destroyed the body, but condemned the soul!'"

Morley had been gazing thoughtfully on the ground, but he now replied, "There may be some cases, Miss Carr, where we should be doing a benefit to society, in firing at a man opposed to us in a duel. Suppose that he were one of those criminals who are daily committing crimes that the laws will not reach?"

"Leave him to God!" replied Juliet, eagerly. "Leave him to God! His law will sooner or later reach all, and it is a law of mercy as well as justice."

They both paused; Juliet with a warm glow upon her cheek, from a feeling that she had been speaking with some vehemence, and Morley doing what so few people ever do in conversation, really weighing the arguments that were addressed to him, and applying them to his own heart.

"But suppose," he said—"suppose a man so placed that his own life is at stake. There are circumstances in which there is every probability that a man must either take life or lose it. For instance, when your adversary is known as an infallible shot, where you have but one chance for your own existence, and where, judging yourself in the right, you have every reason to defend your own life, even at the sacrifice of that of an enemy whom you know to be in the wrong?"

"It is a hard case," replied Juliet Carr, with her eyes cast down upon the ground; "but I am really not fit to be a judge upon such matters, and perhaps have said more than I ought upon the subject already."

"Nay," said Morley; "I really wish to hear your opinion. Believe me it is valuable to me, for I think a woman often judges these sort of things more sanely than a man."

"Well, you shall have it!" replied Juliet Carr, though it is little worth having. You must recollect that I think no man has any right to fight at all, if he be a Christian. He ought, therefore, never to be there, and if he will go there, I cannot see why, to save his own life, he should add a great crime to a great fault, and make murder terminate strife. Perhaps this is speaking too harshly; but what I mean to say is, that I should love, and respect, and admire the man most who, if he have not resolution enough to refuse to fight, would shew that his courage went to the high pitch of risking all, rather than do that which he knew to be the highest pitch of evil. Were I a man I would rather lose life than keep it under a continual sense of remorse—nay, even as a weak woman, I say the same; and I am sure in the choice my courage would not fail."

Morley gazed at her for a moment with tenderness and admiration; but he then replied, as he saw Lady Malcolm approaching them, "Well, then, I promise you, that if ever I should be called

upon to fight, I will recollect your lesson of to-night, and not fire at my adversary."

Juliet looked as if she would fain reply, but Lady Malcolm came up, with a smile, saying, "So you have found each other out! She is scarcely at all changed—is she, Morley?"

"So little, at least in manner," replied Morley, "that every instant I feel myself inclined to forget the years that have past, and to call her Juliet."

If ever lover made an artful speech in this world, it was that which had just proceeded from the lips of Morley Ernstein; for it brought about quietly, as he well knew it would, that which he did not dare to ask openly.

"Why should you call her anything else?" asked Lady Malcolm. "You were like brother and sister in your childhood. Call her Juliet, to be sure. I am certain she has no objection. Have you, my dear girl?"

Morley felt very strongly that they were not brother and sister now, and perhaps Juliet Carr did the same, for she blushed while she replied, "None, assuredly."

"And will you call me Morley again?" demanded her lover—for so we may now well name him.

"Yes," answered Juliet Carr, looking up with that candour of heart which is far, far more attractive than the finest art that ever coquette devised; "I shall find no difficulty in it, for old habits come back with such force that I can scarcely call you anything else."

Morley felt that in the new game he was playing, he had won a point; and, casting from him all thoughts of the following morning, he lingered on at Lady Malcolm's house till he was the last guest present. He then took leave, and quitted the house where he had spent a night of joy, such as he had never known till then; but as he turned from the door, and the memory of the dark business before him rushed upon his mind, it seemed as if a cold wind blew upon him.

CHAPTER XIII.

In the evening and the morning, small objects cast long shadows; but in the mid-day, the meridian sun makes all bright. Not so exactly, however, is it with the day of life, as any man must have felt who has been called upon to repeat, at two distant times in his existence, the same unpleasant act. Take fighting a duel for an instance: with what different feelings the same man sets about the deed, at two or three-and-twenty, and five or six-and-thirty. How the gay buoyancy of youth carries us over the light ruffle of the sea at one period! how little do we heed the menacing storm! how little do we care for the momentary tempest! how confident are we of safety and success! But, at the other period, however strong may

be our resolution, however firm our purpose, however unshaken our nerve, we go to the task set before us with a knowledge of every particle of the peril, with a clear notion of all the consequences, with a calculation of each point of the result. The grasp of a friend's hand comes with a consciousness that it may be for the last time; the look we give to those we love has in it the tenderness of a farewell, and at the same time, all the mighty responsibility of taking the life of another is pressed upon reflection by every sight of human existence around us, by all the fresh joys and hopes that we see in the bosoms of our own fellow-men. Morley Ernstein, however, was in the early day of life; fear was a thing unknown to him, and even with awe he was not very familiar. Thus, when Lieberg's cabriolet came to the door in Berkeley Square, he sprang in with a light step; and, with as cheerful a voice as if he had been going to a wedding, he gave his friend the "Good morning," and asked if he were not a little late.

"Oh, no!" answered Lieberg; "in very good time, and my chesnut here will carry us up as if he were running for the Derby."

Away they rolled at a rate which had something exhilarating in its rapidity. London was

soon left behind; its lengthy suburbs were speedily crossed, and the singing of a lark in the early morning, told that the horse's hoofs were treading the country. The spot appointed was soon reached, the boy handed out the pistol case, and took the horse, and Morley and his friend walked forward into the field, where no one as yet had made his appearance. It was a beautiful summer morning as ever was seen; the country, even in the neighbourhood of London, looked lovely in the early light, and the world altogether seemed too pleasant a place to quit willingly. But Morley Ernstein, though his was the especial time of life when joys are fullest and hopes brightest, and all the things that endear to us mortal existence are in their most attractive aspect, never thought about quitting the world at all. He found it difficult to impress upon his mind the idea of danger; and though a momentary sensation of awe had come over him during the preceding night, all such feeling had gone off, and he looked about for his adversary, in the mere desire of getting a disagreeable business over as soon as possible.

"I would bet five to three that he does not come," said Lieberg; "and really I think that if he do not, I shall go and horsewhip him myself,

for making me get out of my bed at half-past four."

Scarcely had he spoken, however, when the roll of wheels was heard, and a very handsome travelling chaise, with four post-horses, appeared, and drew up at the gate leading into the field. The door was opened, and forth came Mr. Neville, with his friend, Captain Stallfed, whom Morley had seen once before, and a gentleman in black, possessing extensive whiskers, not very well combed, long French-cut hair, and a surgical appearance about the nose and eyes, which at once bespoke his profession.

"Upon my word," said Lieberg, "this looks like execution! Now, Morley, what will you bet that all this is not part of a solemn farce, to squeeze an apology out of you?"

"It will not succeed," answered Morley, and he walked on with Lieberg, to meet the advancing party.

As they came near, the two seconds took a step forward, and Captain Stallfed, as Lieberg had anticipated, began, after the ordinary salutations, to work his way up to the demand of an apology.

"My friend, Mr. Neville," he said, has cer-

tainly been grossly insulted by your friend, Sir Morley Ernstein. However, as Neville is peculiarly situated in some respects, Colonel Lieberg, I have advised him to content himself with an apology." He paused for a moment, as if to see whether Lieberg would reply; but that gentleman was as silent as the grave; and Captain Stallfed went on, with a slight degree of embarrassment. "A-hem!" he said; "if, therefore, your friend thinks fit to say that he is sorry for having used the threat of horsewhipping my friend Neville, I have advised him to drop the matter, and rest satisfied."

"I think you are labouring under a mistake, Captain Stallfed," said Lieberg; "my friend Sir Morley Ernstein would have the greatest pleasure in saying that he is sorry for having threatened to horsewhip your friend Mr. Neville, if he were at all sorry; but, as he fully did intend to horsewhip him, in case Mr. Neville did not find a gentleman of honour and repute, such as Captain Stallfed, to bring the matter to another issue for him, you will easily perceive that my friend can offer no apology whatsoever."

Stallfed looked a little disconcerted, and merely saying—"Very well, sir—very well!" retired to confer with Neville again, whose eyes.

during the brief conversation between his friend and Lieberg, had been round the field, and up the road, and over the hill, with a very anxious and expectant expression. Lieberg marked all this with a smile, saying to Morley—"He is like a cowardly felon at the gallows-foot, asking to be allowed time for another prayer; but we must interrupt his shrift, otherwise I should not wonder if we were interrupted in our proceedings. Captain Stallfed," he said, advancing again a step or two, "we wait your pleasure, and, as it seems to me that your friend is very apprehensive lest we should be annoyed by the Bow-street officers, we had better proceed as fast as possible."

Captain Stallfed bowed, frowned at Neville, and saying, not too low for the other party to hear—"Nonsense—nonsense, man!—the thing must be;" he came forward to make the necessary preparations with Lieberg.

The spot was chosen, the ground measured, and each second threw down a glove, for his friend's standing place, Lieberg calmly overruling a manœuvre of Stallfed's, to place Morley in a line with a tree. In the meanwhile, the young Baronet walked up and down, with his arms folded on his chest, thinking the prepara-

tions somewhat long, while Neville, with the surgeon at his elbow, stood at some distance, listening to such consolations as the man of healing could give him, and evidently under the influence of no very dignified trepidation. Morley, who, from time to time, cast a glance that way, could not help smiling at the bend of the knees, the rounding of the shoulders, and the wandering eagerness of the eye. He thought every moment, indeed, that his gallant antagonist would take to his heels and run, and probably it was only the proximity of the surgeon that prevented such a consummation. Everything being at length complete, however, Lieberg placed his man, saying—"Now, don't miss him, Morley."

"I don't intend to fire at him," replied Morley.

Lieberg looked at him with astonishment, but there was no time for further explanation, and merely saying—"You are joking, surely!" he withdrew.

In the meanwhile, Neville, in dead silence had been brought to his ground, and Stallfed gave him some directions in a low voice. "Is the handkerchief tight round your arm?" he asked—"well, raise your pistol smartly, keep him

on the outside of your elbow, and you are sure to hit him. Can't you steady your hand, man? That d—d shaking will ruin you !"

Neville answered not a word, and it is probable that at that moment he neither saw, heard, nor understood. The two seconds, however, retired; and, as it had been arranged that the parties were to fire together, the "one, two, three" was pronounced, and both pistols went off very nearly at the same moment. Neville's, indeed, was a little the first, as he had been instructed by his friend, to fire even before the word "three" was pronounced. To the surprise of all parties present, not only did Morley fire directly in the air, but Neville, notwithstanding his terror, his confusion, and his shaking hand, sent his ball with so true an aim, that it passed through Morley's coat, and slightly wounded him, by grazing his right shoulder. Unconscious of his success, however, he fell to the ground at once, as soon as he heard the report of his adversary's pistol; but upon Stallfed and the surgeon coming up, both of whom had clearly seen, that Morley had fired in the air, the swindler got upon his feet again, declaring that he had stumbled over a stone.

"Stumbled!" exclaimed Stallfed, in an angry tone; "why what the devil business had you to

move at all? I suppose, Colonel Lieberg, as your friend fired in the air, we cannot demand another fire!"

Ere Lieberg could reply, the party in the field was increased by three or four other persons, at the head of whom appeared R——, the Bow-street officer, coming up, as was then usually the case, in encounters of such a kind, somewhat slowly and tardily, to prevent a duel, which had already taken place.

"These, I presume," said Lieberg, as he marked the approach of the new comers; "these, I presume, are the gentlemen whom your friend expected, and of course we shall have the pleasure of figuring at Bow-street, while you have the satisfaction of seeing the whole in a newspaper."

By the time this was said, the officers were up with them, and gave them intimation that they must present themselves before a magistrate. To Lieberg and Morley, R—— and his companions were perfectly civil and deferential; but with Neville and Captain Stallfed—ay, and with the surgeon those gentlemen had brought thither, the officers were quite friendly and familiar. Promising to appear at Bow-street as soon as the magistrates took their seat in the

office, Lieberg and Morley got into the cabriolet, and drove away, Morley tying a handkerchief round his arm to stanch the blood, which was now trickling through his coat. The officers remained with the rest of the party, and R—— with his hands in his breeches pockets, gazed over the chariot and four horses with a cunning smile.

"Why Nevvy," he said, "this is a flare-up, and will cost you a trifle—I take it!"

"I'll tell you what, R——," said the Captain, "it ought to be worth five hundred pounds to him, if he manages the matter well. Why, having fought a duel with Sir Morley Ernstein, and wounded him in the arm, is enough to make a man of him."

"Hard to do that," said R——, with a knowing look; "why, Nevvy, how did you ever screw yourself up to come to the scratch?—cost you a pint of thunder and lightning, I'll bet. But come, we must be jogging; as the chay is full, I'll get up behind. We wont put the darbies on you, this time, Nevvy; though, if you don't mind what you're about, it'll come to that, I give you warning. I had some talk about you, the other day, with the old gentleman in the wig, and he said, it wouldn't do

much longer; so keep quiet, there's a good fellow."

The first case called on before the magistrates that morning, was that of the duel; the tidings of which had spread far and wide through London, before ten o'clock, and the office was consequently full of reporters. The matter was soon settled, in the usual manner; but the magistrate in a grave, but kindly, tone, thought fit to address to Morley a few words of remonstrance, upon the practice of duelling in general, adding a caution, in regard of the choice of associates, while his eye rested with stern severity upon Neville and his worthy second.

"I thank you much, sir," said Morley, with his usual firm and manly manner, "for the warning that you give me; but, you will understand that these persons are not my associates, and not even my acquaintances. I chanced to meet one of them in the commission of acts which I judged imprudent and wrong, and I threatened him with chastisement. As he found a person bearing his Majesty's commission, to act as his friend on the occasion, I thought fit to give him that satisfaction which is usual amongst gentlemen; reserving to myself the right, and holding firmly

the determination, of chastising him as I promised, should he give me further occasion for offence."

"I will beg of these gentlemen of the press, to remark," said Lieberg, turning towards the reporters, "that my friend, Sir Morley Ernstein, only consented to meet Mr. Neville, because he did not choose to refuse any man satisfaction when it was demanded; but in order to guard against a bad precedent being established in favour of Mr. Neville, let me add, that I consider him a coward as well as a blackguard, and only regret that my friend treated him with so much lenity."

He was going to add more, but the magistrate interfered, and Lieberg left the place, accompanied by Morley, the former saying, with a laugh—

"It was necessary, my dear Ernstein, to make some observation on the business, which these gentlemen would not very much like repeated, otherwise they would dress up so smart a story of it in the newspapers, that Neville, for the rest of his life, would be treated as a gentleman, and have the privilege of plundering all sorts of young fools with impunity."

Notwithstanding all Lieberg's precautions, the

report of the affair in the newspapers, was such as newspaper reports but too frequently are. There was so much truth in the statement as to give it perfect verisimilitude, and to render it impossible to say that it was all a lie, but with so much left untold as to create an impression as erroneous as if the whole had been untrue. It appeared by the report, that Sir Morley Ernstein had fought the well-known Mr. Neville, and had been severely wounded in the arm; that the parties had been brought to Bow Street, and bound over to keep the peace, some sharp words passing between them in the office. The statement ended with the words—"The quarrel, we find, took place about a lady!"

CHAPTER XIV.

MORLEY ERNSTEIN cast down the evening newspaper in disgust, and walked up and down the room with angry feelings in his heart, which would not bear control. Whither was it that his thoughts first wandered? The reader need hardly ask—it was to Juliet Carr. As early in the day as the usages of society had permitted, he had called upon Lady Malcolm, but, as almost invariably happens when one has a particular object in seeing any friend, male or female, both Lady Malcolm herself, and Miss Carr were reported by the servant to be out. His next visit was to Mr. Hamilton, and there the report was very unfavourable. The next was to a surgeon, for his shoulder; though the wound had been but slight, was becoming very pain-

ful. The man of healing, of course, put him to ten times more pain, in order to give him relief; and thus Morley had all the most unpleasant preparatives that a man can have, for seeing his name in a newspaper. He had been disappointed in his expectations—he had been grieved for a friend—he had been put to positive pain himself, and now he saw such an account of an affair, which was assuredly not discreditable to himself, as to produce an impression the most to be dreaded, on the minds of those he loved and esteemed. His imagination was a quick one, and with the rapid magic of thought, he summoned to his mind all that Juliet Carr would think—all that Juliet Carr would feel, on hearing that he had quarrelled with, and fought a swindler, "*on account of a lady!*"

Men little know to what an immense extent their own acquaintance with all the evil and wickedness of the world affects their estimate of other people's thoughts and opinions. The rascal, nine times out of ten, supposes every body to possess the same rascally feelings as himself; and men, in picturing to their own mind the thoughts of women, imagine that those thoughts are founded upon knowledge that few

of the gentler sex have any means of possessing. Morley Ernstein, himself, though he believed the mind of Juliet Carr to be as pure as that of an angel, fancied nevertheless, that the moment her eye rested upon that paragraph, she would see him in the midst of scenes of vice and licentiousness, quarrelling with a black-leg, for an abandoned woman.

Morley was quite mistaken, however. It is true, that scarcely one of all the many male eyes which that day read the news of Bow-street, failed to receive exactly such an impression from the paragraph concerning himself. But what did Juliet Carr think?—Any thing but what her lover supposed. Juliet Carr was a great reader of character; she was endowed by nature with that discriminating power—for depend upon it, reader, it is a gift, not an acquirement—which enables us by some traits, often even undefinable to ourselves, and generally totally unnoticed by others, to distinguish at once the innate or habitual springs of action in those with whom we are brought in contact. I know not well, whether that gift be most likely to prove a blessing or a curse. It may often guide our actions, but it seldom guides our affections, and too often renders the struggle between inclination and reason, more

painful than it always is. Juliet Carr had discovered very rapidly all the principal traits of Morley Ernstein's character; but even had not that been the case, she was not sufficiently acquainted with the evils of the world in general, to conjure up the picture which Morley supposed would present itself to her imagination.

Thus, when she read the account of the duel, she felt quite certain that the cause of quarrel was some impetuous act springing from a generous impulse. When she came to the fact of his having fired in the air, a smile of pleasure brightened her face, crossing the look of painful anxiety with which she had been reading; but when in the end she found that he was wounded, she dropped the paper from her hand with feelings of mingled fear and sorrow, and with something like self-reproach, as if her counsels of the night before had caused the injury under which he suffered. Taking up the newspaper quickly again, she carried it at once into the neighbouring room, where Lady Malcolm was sitting, and pointing out the paragraph with a pale cheek and an anxious eye, which her worthy cousin did not fail to remark, she asked Lady Malcolm, if she could not send to obtain some more certain information as to he real state of their young friend. Lady Mal-

colm replied, that she would write at once, and the letter was accordingly despatched.

It was now about half-past eight o'clock at night, and to make sure of the note being properly delivered, and that a correct account of Morley Ernstein's health should be brought, Juliet's cousin despatched an old and faithful servant of her own, who was well acquainted with good Adam Gray, the young gentleman's attached dependent. In about three quarters of an hour the man returned, saying, that he had left the note, and that Sir Morley Ernstein must be better, for he had gone out, the waiter said, on purpose to see Miss Barham.

Lady Malcolm remarked that Juliet turned slightly pale, and being the best disposed woman in the world to relieve persons from unpleasant sensations, she replied, "Nonsense! there must be some mistake, William. Did you see old Adam Gray?"

"No, my lady," replied the man; "I did not; but the waiter told me, that Sir Morley had especially directed him, if any one called, to say that he had gone to see Miss Barham."

Lady Malcolm was one of those who make the most of a difficulty by attempting to get over it, and she was in the high road to try

whether she could not persuade the man that he was mistaken, when Juliet rose quietly, and went into the other room, as if to seek a book. Her ladyship then saw that there was no need of proceeding further, and suffered her servant to depart.

In the meanwhile, Juliet rested her hand upon the table in the next room for a moment, and gazed thoughtfully at the lamp. The flame was bright and clear—and whether she found some fanciful affinity between the object on which her eyes were fixed, and that of which her mind was in search, I know not; but certainly at that moment she was seeking for light, upon subjects connected with her own feelings, and with the circumstances round her, and the lamp of the mind had suddenly become dim and shadowy. Now many a reader may think that the question with which she busied herself was, whether Morley Ernstein was really in love with another? whether, after all that his lips had said, and all that his look had said—nay, all that his whole demeanour had said, during the preceding evening, his heart could really be given to a different object—his affections at that very time engrossed by another? Such, however, was not the question that Juliet

Carr addressed to herself. It did not at all refer to the feelings of Morley Ernstein. It referred to her own. She asked herself, what it was that made such strange sensations shoot through her bosom, at the thought of his passing that evening with another? She asked herself, why she should feel as if a cold hand pressed her heart, at the idea of his being attached to another? Had she been dreaming? Had she been indulging visions that she had no right to indulge? or, had she really suffered her imagination to be captivated by a wild, gay, ardent, young man, who perhaps addressed the same flattery of words and manner to some new acquaintance every night? Juliet Carr was frightened at her own feelings, and for the rest of the evening, though not absolutely melancholy, she was grave and thoughtful.

About eleven o'clock on the following day, Lady Malcolm went out, not telling her fair visitor where she was going at that early hour. It must be recollected, that she was first cousin to Juliet's mother, and her period of life was somewhat more than that mother's age would have been had she been still living. She was, perhaps, forty-eight or nine; and cares and sorrows—those sad beauty-killers—had left her

less of the appearance of youth than might have been her portion, if her life had passed smoothly and happily. It was upon the strength of her age, then, that Lady Malcolm now ventured towards Berkeley Square, in order to visit Morley Ernstein, and enquire into his proceedings with her own lips.

In the meantime, however, that young gentleman himself, as so often happens on such occasions, had been impelled towards the house of Lady Malcolm, taking his way, as if on purpose, by streets the most distinct and opposite to those which the good lady herself pursued. He had not the slightest idea, it is true, that there was a chance of her coming to call upon him; but still, if the truth must be told, his heart beat with a pleasurable pulse when he heard that Lady Malcolm was out, and that Miss Carr was at home.

He followed the servant quickly up the stairs, through the first drawing-room, and into the second, where Juliet was busy, writing a letter; so that she scarcely heard his name announced ere he was before her. The colour mounted up into her cheek, a smile came upon her lip, and she received him kindly and courteously; but still there was, in her manner, or at least Morley thought so, a

certain degree of coldness, which his warm and eager nature could not endure, even for a moment. Time to think had been allowed him since the first impression, which had been produced upon his mind by reading the newspaper-account of his duel with Neville, and various other circumstances had combined, to fix him in a resolution which he now proceeded to execute. He sat down, then, at once beside Juliet Carr, saying—

"You must forgive me for coming at this early hour, and, still further, you must forgive me for preventing you from writing your letter, perhaps for a long time, as I intend to stay here till Lady Malcolm comes back."

There was something in his manner that agitated Juliet Carr, but she would not give way to the sensations of her own heart, nor suffer herself to fancy, for a moment, that there was any other feeling towards her in his, than common friendship.

"Indeed, I am very happy to see you," she replied; "we were very anxious to hear of you last night; for we saw, in the newspaper, an account——"

"Of my having become a duellist, notwithstanding all your kind cautions," said Morley.

"Yes," answered Juliet Carr, with a bright smile; "but also of your having acted well and nobly, even though you did yield to the bad influence of man's customs."

"You mean in not firing at my adversary," said Morley. "Well, I will confess to you, that at the moment I was conversing with you, the night before, I had fully made up my mind to shoot him. Nay, more, I thought I should be serving society by so doing."

"Oh, then," exclaimed Juliet, warmly, "I do rejoice that I said what I did, if I am to believe it had any effect upon you. Think, with what different feelings we should now have met, if you had killed that man—think how sad and melancholy you would have been."

"Your words had every effect," replied Morley, "for they entirely stopped me in my purpose, and I will own, now, that I am most glad I listened to them; not only, because it gives me pleasure to have followed your counsel, but because I am satisfied, that counsel was right; and now let us speak, Juliet," he continued, "of that newspaper account which you saw of the business, for, believe me, your good opinion is more valuable to me than anything else in life."

Juliet blushed, and her heart beat quickly; but following that first impulse, which generally affects the mind of woman on such occasions, she sought to avoid the more agitating part of the theme, and replied, quickly, "I see that one part of the account must be false; for it stated that you were severely wounded. It was that which made me and Lady Malcolm so anxious to hear how you were. She wrote to you last night, but——"

"I was out," replied Morley, with that straightforward frankness of demeanour, which wrought a change in Juliet's feelings at every word—"I would have come, in answer to her note, myself, but I was obliged to go out, early in the evening, to see a young lady of the name of Barham, whose situation is one which, I think, will interest you deeply when you come to hear the particulars."

Juliet Carr drew a long, deep sigh; her eyes remained fixed upon the table; the fine turned upper lip quivered, as she listened; and the beautiful nostril expanded, as if some struggling feelings in her breast required more breath in their eager contest.

"It was my intention," continued Morley, "to interest Mr. Hamilton, my former guardian, in

this business, and to induce him to do all for Miss Barham that I could wish to do; but he, I am sorry to say, is extremely ill, and I must apply to Lady Malcolm and yourself to help me.'

"Oh, that we will, willingly!" exclaimed Juliet. "But what is the matter, Morley?—why cannot you act for yourself? Is this the lady, about whom they say you fought the duel?"

There was a slight smile upon her face as she asked the last question—but each of the three was somewhat difficult to answer, and Morley chose the least.

"It was not exactly about her that the quarrel took place," he said, "though it was in her house. This man, Neville, who is a swindler, had gone there with purposes which, perhaps, Juliet, I could better explain to Lady Malcolm than yourself. It is sufficient to say, that they were insulting to an innocent and amiable girl, overwhelmed with misfortunes of various kinds: first, the death of her father, a poor, but respectable clergyman, after a long and tedious illness, which exhausted all his resources: next, the pressure of poverty; and last, but greatest of all, the infamous conduct of a brother, who has abandoned himself to every sort of evil, and would sell or betray his sister for a very slight

consideration. It was the wish to see if I could do something, both to relieve and reclaim this youth, that took me to Miss Barham's house, when I met the man, Neville, there. I had never beheld her before, but I then saw enough to make me sure that she was innocent and good, and you may easily imagine, that I did not feel disposed to suffer her to be injured or insulted in my presence."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Juliet, enthusiastically, "I am sure you would not—I am sure that you would do everything in your power to protect and assist her."

Somehow or another, I know not well how, Morley Ernstein seemed to feel he had got a little the advantage of Juliet Carr, and he replied, with a smile—

"I am most anxious to do everything; but how it is to be done is the question, Juliet; for I must let you into one secret—this Miss Barham is young and very beautiful."

He saw the colour in Juliet's cheek vary, in a manner that gave him greater pleasure than anything that he had beheld for many a day; and yet he hastened to restore it to a steadier tone.

"There are two difficulties, Juliet," he said; "one of which I do not like to encounter, and

one of which I have no right to encounter. You will easily understand," he continued, with a smile, "that I cannot take this pretty Helen Barham to my house, or even send her thither and give her an asylum there, though, for a thousand reasons, it were better that she should leave London. If she remains, I cannot shield her from persecution and annoyance; and my being with her frequently, might produce an impression on the minds of others, that my views towards her were of an evil nature; while in herself," he added, slowly and gravely, "it might induce a belief that I am actuated by feelings of personal attachment, which I can never feel. Do not suppose me vain, Juliet; but it is right to remember that, thrown altogether into my society, resting upon me for protection and support, experiencing some kindness from me, and feeling more gratitude than I deserve, she might learn to entertain sentiments that I could never return, and should be deeply grieved to disappoint."

Juliet's lips moved, though there was no sound proceeded from them, but her heart said something that Morley Ernstein might have been glad to hear.

"To speak the truth, Juliet," continued Mor-

ley, "it is more lest she should mistake me, than lest others should mistake me, that I am anxious. It so seldom happens that a man is very eager to serve a woman without some motive, that she might well think I am influenced by an attachment to herself, unless—unless—unless, in short, I can find some more proper person than myself to stand prominently forward in this business. Some facts which I heard last night, and which made me hurry to her instantly, render it the more necessary that she should be removed from her present abode at once."

"Why?" demanded Juliet; "is she in any danger?"

"She is in danger of being placed in the most painful situation possible," replied Morley. "Her brother has thrown himself entirely in the power of the swindler Neville. Their views upon this poor girl are such as I can hardly explain, for there are things which, to ears so pure as yours, are offensive even to hear named."

"Alas!" replied Juliet, looking up in his face, with a sweet yet sad smile, "one cannot live any time in the world, Morley, without being well aware that there are many vices and evils of all kinds going on around us. I am not

sure that it would be beneficial to us to be ignorant that such things exist, if they must exist; but, however, I can easily conceive that this man's views and purposes are infamous. The only thing I cannot comprehend is, how a brother can lend himself to disgrace a sister. What can be his inducement? What can be the motive strong enough to lead him to an act which one would imagine the most depraved mind would shrink from with horror?"

"The hope of life, Juliet," replied Morley—"the fear of death. These are his inducements; but that part of the subject I must not touch upon with you. Wherever he is concerned, I will deal with the affair myself, and hope still to save him from the consequences of his own crime and folly. If he cannot be saved, however, we must shield his sister from his importunities; and if you will help me in this—if you will give her your countenance, assistance, and protection, I am sure she will be grateful, and I, Juliet, will be deeply so."

"I will do anything you like," cried Juliet, with a glowing countenance; "I will go to her this moment, if you please. Oh, I forgot I was in London!" she added, sitting down again on the sofa, from which she had partly risen.

"But, however, whatever you think best to be done, I am quite ready to do. You know, I believe, Morley, that my means of helping her —in point of money, I mean—are not very large, and that I have some poor pensioners at home, but still I have quite enough to give her assistance for the time, and I shall soon have more."

Morley gazed at her with sensations that kept him silent for a moment. "It is unnecessary," he replied, at length; "I can supply all that. I have far more than I know how to employ properly, Juliet, and, indeed, I think that when I have engaged you so deeply in this affair that you cannot escape me, I shall try to induce you to give me counsel in the disposal of that wealth which is too great not to imply a serious obligation to employ it properly. Will you be my monitor, Juliet?"

Juliet Carr looked down, and again turned pale, saying, in a low voice, "Willingly, Morley, if I could be vain enough to think my counsels would aid or benefit you."

Strange as it may seem, the same sudden paleness which had alarmed Morley Ernstein on the preceding night, making him doubt whether Juliet's heart was free, and resolve to

bridle his impetuous spirit and proceed coolly and slowly to ascertain what were her real feelings before he committed himself, lest vanity should meet a rebuff and love a disappointment —the same sudden paleness now produced a contrary effect. During their conference of that morning there had been a thousand little signs, a thousand little passing expressions of the countenance, which had raised hope and expectation. There had been a light in her eyes when she raised them suddenly to his face, a changing colour under his glance, an agitation in the voice, an occasional embarrassment in the manner,—all of which shewed Morley Ernstein that he had the power, at least, of producing emotion in the heart of Juliet Carr, and there is something in that power which renders it akin either to love or fear. Morley was very sure that there was no touch of the latter passion in her feelings. He hoped, then, naturally enough, that there might be somewhat of the former. How the matter would have gone on at that moment, Heaven only knows, but just as the words passed Juliet's lips, there was a loud knock at the street-door, and Juliet added—"There is Lady Malcolm!"

There was no time left then for any long ex-

planations, but Morley took the hand which rested on the table—it was certainly a fair book, that might have been kissed by Jews or infidels, with no light devotion—and pressing his lips upon it, he said—"Thus, dear Juliet, I seal your promise."

"What promise?" exclaimed Juliet Carr, with a start and a blush.

"To be my monitor," replied Morley. He would have fain added "for life," but he dared not risk all at that moment, and ere either of them could utter more, Lady Malcolm entered the room.

CHAPTER XV.

EACH act and fact in human nature, and in human life, is connected by so many links, with everything around, that the man who sets out to tell a history, if he would tell it completely, has as many different threads to follow, as a spider in the middle of his web. If he pursue one for any length, without deviating, he finds that he has left forty or fifty other branches on either side, which—each of them more or less—affect the narrative in the end. He has to come back for each, to follow each out carefully, or else some of the meshes in the web will be found broken, when most he wants them. Thus must we return, to take up the history of Morley Ernstein, at that particular point where we left off to expatiate upon men's miscalculations of the thoughts

of women, being thence seduced away by very natural inducements, to tell what was really going on in the mind of sweet Juliet Carr; and thence again, as speedily to recount her interview with Morley on the subsequent day.

After having thrown down the newspaper, then, and strode up and down the room for some time, with indignation and bitterness of heart, Morley began to consider what was the best course for him to pursue in order to prevent such impressions, as he feared had been produced, from becoming permanent in the mind of her he loved. In short, he acted like any other impetuous man. He first became violently angry at the apprehension of an evil, and then, after having wasted half an hour in the whirl of passion, began to do what it would have been better to do at first, and think of means to remedy what had gone amiss. He determined, then, as we have seen, to tell Juliet Carr as much as he could tell of Helen Barham's history, and to explain frankly and straightforwardly his whole conduct. The only question was, how was this to be brought about naturally? Juliet Carr would certainly never demand any account of how or why he had fought the duel, or who was the lady to whom the newspapers referred. Nay,

more, most probably she would even shrink from the subject altogether, if such suspicions were excited in her mind as he anticipated.

After some thought, the plan suddenly flashed upon his mind, of interesting Lady Malcolm, and even Juliet herself, in the situation of Helen Barham, and thus delivering himself from two difficulties at once. What politicians love does make of us! As soon as the idea struck him, he saw the whole benefit of it, and resolved to follow it out immediately. He would break through all ceremony; he would go to Lady Malcolm that very night, and with this view he rang the bell, and asked if he could have his dinner earlier than he had ordered it.

The waiter replied, "Yes, sir;" and, as usual in such cases, the dinner was half an hour later than ever. Morley ate it, when it did come, as fast as possible, but he had just concluded when information was brought him, that a gentleman wished to see him upon business, and ordering him to be admitted, with a somewhat impatient expression, Mr. Higgins was ushered in with a deferential air. With that careful eschewance of all listening ears, which was one point of Mr. Higgins's prudence, that gentleman remained bowing in silence, till the waiter was out of the

room, after which he approached a little nearer to the table, saying—

"I have done the matter, sir. I can tell you all about it, now; I set somebody to pump Nevvy himself, for I could make nothing of Bill, and I find the lad has done that which shews he prefers hemp to lint any time, by way of a neck-handkerchief. He'll swing, sir—there's no helping it. He'll swing—you'll see," and Mr. Higgins stuck his hands forcibly into his breeches pockets, as the most powerful mode of asseveration which he could adopt. "I don't like exactly to tell you what he's done, sir," he continued, "though I'm sure you wouldn't peach, but still——"

"I know what he has done," answered Morley, calmly; "all I want to know now is, whose is the name he forged?"

Higgins gazed at him in some surprise, at finding that the young gentleman had arrived so rapidly at so dangerous a piece of information.

"Why, sir," he replied, "as you know so much, I might as well tell you all, but yet, when a lad's neck's in jeopardy——"

"All I seek," said Morley, somewhat impatiently, "is the lad's own good. If I cannot benefit him I will not hurt him, depend upon it; so speak out, Mr. Higgins—who is the man?"

"Why, he is a friend of yours, sir," replied Higgins, "that is what makes me so careful."

"Mr. Hamilton!" said Morley, looking in the man's face with consternation; for he well knew that the crime of forgery was one which, in the eyes of the banker, however tender and lenient he was on other occasions, could only be expiated by death. "Mr. Hamilton! That is, indeed, unfortunate!"

"No, no, sir," answered Higgins, "both he and Neville knew better than that. The Colonel, sir—the Colonel's the man. No one would ever believe that any of Neville's party could have a bill of Mr. Hamilton's, but as for the Colonel, sir—the Count, some folks call him—being a little bit upon the turf, and a good deal in the world, and all that, the thing was likely enough."

While the man had been speaking, Morley Ernstein had revolved in his own mind all the consequences of Lieberg's possessing the power of life and death over William Barham. He doubted not, for a moment, that his friend would abandon all thought of proceeding against the unfortunate young man, at his request; but after what had passed between them the morning before, his mind could not help entertaining a fear, that Lieberg might use the hold he had acquired, to the injury of Helen Barham. He

knew that Lieberg would think it doing her no wrong, to seek to place her in a situation of affluence and ease, at the expense of what the world in general calls virtue. He could not help acknowledging, too, that Lieberg's chance of success in such a pursuit was very much more probable than that of the man Neville. Strikingly handsome as he was in person, there was a fascination about his manners, a charm in his eloquence, which Morley himself could not resist. He felt that it was sometimes dangerous to him, but yet it was most agreeable; and even he himself, with all his strong good sense, while talking with Lieberg, lost the clear distinction of what was right and wrong, or only retained it by a great struggle, which, if he abandoned for a moment, all his ideas on such subjects became vague and shadowy, as in that pleasant moment when tired, but not too tired, we sink into the arms of sleep, scarcely knowing at what point our waking thoughts desert us. What might be the influence of such a man, Morley asked, over a young and inexperienced girl like Ellen Barham, when he had the life of her brother in his hands? Morley feared very much for the result: he had marked, in that poor girl, the traces of strong

and deep feelings; eager and somewhat wild enthusiasms—seeds, in short, that might be speedily made to shoot up into powerful passions. Yes, he feared very much for the result! There was nothing to be done, but to remove her speedily and at once from the scene, before the attempt to save her brother was made, and his resolution was taken accordingly.

"There, Mr. Higgins," he said, pushing across a note to that worthy; "there is what I promised; and now tell me one or two things more about this business. First of all, how soon is the matter likely to be discovered?"

"Why, on Saturday, sir," replied Higgins; "I hear it's a promissory note at a month, and it's up on Saturday. Neville has made the boy believe that he can and will stop the thing, but he can no more do that than he can fly. The note is out of his hands long ago. The way the thing was done was very unfair to the lad, too, I hear. He has a great art of imitating any writing he sees, and they got him to copy the Colonel's name, which he had never heard of before, making him think that it was that of somebody who had been dead a long while. When he found out the trick, however, and was in so great a fright that they thought he would go and blab

the whole directly, they coaxed him down by giving him some forty or fifty pounds of the money, which he went and spent directly with a girl named Sally Cole. Neville, too, persuaded him that he would take the bill up, though Neville took care not to be present when William signed the name."

"It is strange," said Morley, "how a set of men, so well known to be scoundrels as these are, can ever get a forged bill like that into circulation."

"Oh it is very easily done, sir," replied Higgins, "it goes through half-a-dozen hands, each of whom make a good thing by it. They sold it to a man for half the money, or perhaps less; then he sold it to one of the low regular money-lenders for thirty or forty pounds more. He again sent it to another, who had a somewhat better name; and then, when my Lord This-thing or my Lord That-thing comes to him for four or five thousand pounds, he will give him this bill as part payment. However, they'll soon get hold of poor Bill, for every one of them will give him up, and there are plenty ready to turn evidence against him."

"Then you think there is no chance," said Morley, "of Neville ever recovering the bill?"

"Not he," answered Higgins; "a thousand to one, sir, it is in the hands of some banker by this time, and unless one could prig the clerk's pocket-book, there is no stopping the matter now. The only way would be, to get Bill out of the way, but I doubt if these fellows would let him go; for they know very well, that Sir Richard will have one of them: and as the boy is boots, you see, sir, they think he had better swing early."

"They may find themselves mistaken," said Morley; "however, I must see what can be done. Good night, Mr. Higgins."

"I say, sir," said Higgins, with a sly look, before he departed: "Have you got hold of the young lady yet?"

"You mistake, my good friend," said Morley, sternly; "I have no such intentions as you suppose."

"Well, sir," said the man, nothing abashed, "you'll easily manage it if you like. Bill Barham told me he was going to call upon you to-night between seven and eight; and you could easily bring him to terms—that I saw very well. No offence, sir, I hope. Good night."

Morley Ernstein remained standing for a moment in thought. "The girl must be removed,"

he said, speaking to himself, "and if the youth can be induced to go and confess all to Lieberg, with an offer of repaying the money, I doubt not all may yet go well. When Lieberg finds that Helen Barham is gone, and that even her brother does not know where to find her, he will of course think that I have seduced her, and taken her away. Well, let him do so, for the present! If Lady Malcolm helps me, we will soon convince him of the contrary. In the meantime things must take their course; I will go to her at once, and see if she will put herself entirely under my direction, before I speak with Lady Malcolm."

Ere he set out, he left directions to inform William Barham, if that praiseworthy young gentleman called, that he was gone to his sister's house; and in Davis-street he got into a hackney-coach with the intention of proceeding thither more quickly. That sad and tardy contrivance for wasting men's time, however, was not at all suited to the eager spirit of Morley Ernstein, and ere it had rumbled through more than two or three streets, he made the coachman stop, paid him his fare, jumped out, and proceeded on foot. On arriving at Helen Barham's dwelling, he was admitted instantly; for

the maid, who had her own notion of the object of his visits, had heard all about him from the groom, who had accompanied him at first, and judging that the arrangement would do very well, took care to be especially civil to one whom she supposed would be her future master. She even made way for him to go up the stairs before her, and Morley, who was too eager to be ceremonious, passed on, and opened the drawing-room door himself.

Helen Barham had learned to know his knock and his step, however, and with her pencil in her hand, as she sat working hard at a drawing before her, she gazed up with a glad and eager look towards the opening door, to see if her ear had not deceived her. It was by this time night. There might be a ray or two of daylight still in the sky, but not enough for her to see her drawing. The windows therefore had been closed, and the lamp lighted, and as she sat with the rays falling full upon her face, with her bright eyes raised towards the opening door, her lips apart and shewing the white teeth, her form bent forward with expectation, and the fair, delicate hand holding the pencil suspended over the paper, certainly nothing more lovely could have presented itself

to the eyes of Morley Ernstein. Then came up in her face the light of joy as she saw him, the beaming of gratitude and regard, as if to give sunshine to the picture.

It was altogether like a fine Rembrandt, for, both morally and physically, the full light was all concentrated in that one spot in the room, and everything else around was dark to the eye, and to the heart. There she sat, alone—a being, formed to ornament society, to give happiness to others, to receive happiness from them, to animate, to cheer, to soothe, to taste, to feel, to enjoy! There she sat, alone, pursuing solitary and ungrateful labour through the long hours of the night, with sad thoughts as her only companions, and no voice of father, of brother, or of husband, to comfort and support her. The first reflection that crossed the mind of Morley Ernstein, after the impression of her dazzling beauty subsided, was, how sad and gloomy must her existence have been for many a long day past! The feelings in his heart might well have tempted him to take the stricken lamb to his bosom, to nourish, and to cheer her there, without one evil sensation, or one thought but for her good; and the reader may well pardon him, if—although he was guarded

by a passion, intense and true, for another—if, notwithstanding all he could do, there was a tenderness in his manner, a gentle affection in his tone, that was very dangerous to poor Helen Barham. She sprang up, she held out her hand to him, she exclaimed, with a look that told the whole joy of her heart—

"Oh! how glad I am to see you! Do you know, I have found a way of supporting myself quite well, till I can get some more scholars. Since I saw you, I have sold two of my drawings to a shop in Pall Mall, and received two guineas for them. I did not think the things were worth anything, but merely for my scholars to copy; but as I went past the windows of a drawing shop, I saw some that did not seem better than mine, so I resolved to try. The man gave me two guineas at once, and said he would take as many more as I could bring; so that now, you see, I am rich."

"I am afraid, my dear Miss Barham," said Morley, with a smile, "that I have come to destroy all your fine projects; but, do not be alarmed, it is to substitute others in their place, which, I trust, may not be disagreeable to you."

The sensation of her position in regard to

Morley Ernstein, her total dependence, as it were, upon him, the power he seemed to have over her fate, and the right of interfering in it, which he had at once assumed, never seemed to affect Helen Barham painfully when she was pouring forth expressions of gratitude for what he had done, or when showing her thankfulness in word, in look, or in tone. But when he seemed about to propose any line of conduct, or offer any further assistance, a vague sensation of apprehension, as it were, a sort of indistinct consciousness that whatever he asked her, were it right or wrong, she would do, caused the fluttering blood to come into her cheek, her heart to beat, and her breathing to grow quick with expectation.

"What is it you wish me to do?" she asked, in a tone that implied, "You have but to tell me, and I will do it."

Morley paused for a moment before he answered. There was something in the whole circumstances of the moment, and especially in the extraordinary difference between the manner with which Helen Barham now received him, and that with which she had first met him some days before, which affected him strangely. Was there again a struggle in his heart? Was

there again temptation? Was there again the voice of the earthly spirit prompting him to rush impetuously to the gratification of every impulse without fear or thought of the consequences to himself and others? Reader, we will not pry into his heart too closely; we will not look for that which it might be painful to find. If Morley Ernstein was tempted, he overcame the temptation; nor did it reach such a point, that the better spirit was called to fight vehemently against the adversary.

He paused for a moment, and his heart beat quick—but that was all; and he then explained to Helen that he had discovered the person whose name her brother had so criminally used —that he was a friend of his own—and that he believed, beyond all doubt, he should have the means of inducing him to stop all proceedings against the offender. In the next place, he told her, that he still thought it absolutely necessary, both on her own and her brother's account, that she should immediately remove from her present abode, into the country. He informed her that it was his intention, if possible, to induce William Barham to go abroad to one of the British Colonies, where employment of an honourable kind would be found for him; but,

at the same time, he showed her, that if her brother was still suffered to entertain any hopes of concealing the forgery, by playing into the hands of the man, Neville, he might be kept lingering on in England till it was too late to save him, and at all events might never be disentangled from the evil companions to whom he had devoted himself. At the same time he urged that the only way to make him abandon every attempt to carry out his infamous bargain with Neville, was to place her beyond his reach altogether, and not even to let him know where she was.

She listened for a moment in silence, with her eyes bent down, and evidently full of thought, and then looked up in his face, with something like a tear upon her eyelashes. "You have been so kind and good," she said, in a faltering voice, "and have shewn yourself so generous, that I scarcely ought to ask you any questions, but only, I am afraid—that is to say, having no friend who has yet expressed a willingness to receive me, I think people might judge it strange, if I were to go anywhere with you alone—I mean, under your care—without my own brother knowing it. But I see you are smiling—I have mistaken you.

But, oh, no! indeed I have not doubted you—I am sure, Sir Morley Ernstein, you would not wrong me in any way;" and she gave him her hand.

"Not for the world," he replied. "I smiled at myself, Miss Barham—my mind being fully occupied with my own plans for you. I forgot to tell you one half of them, which ought to have been told you at first. My friend, Mr. Hamilton's illness has embarrassed me; but there is an excellent lady, an old friend of my mother's, to whom I intend to apply for assistance, which I know she will give, for she is not a little of an enthusiast herself in all that is good, and is ever eager to help misfortune. I will apply to her, and to a young lady who is now with her, an old friend of mine, and I feel perfectly certain—or at least very certain—that they will not refuse to give me every sort of aid in carrying my plans for you into execution. I will go to them early to-morrow, and doubt not soon to bring you back good news from them. But let us consider the worst, my dear Miss Barham: suppose I were to find Lady Malcolm and Miss Carr either not disposed, or not able to afford or ensure you a safe asylum, I still believe that it would be absolutely necessary

for you, at any risk, and whatever the world may say, to quit this place, and separate yourself from your brother for a time. There are occasions on which we must brave the world's opinion, when we know that we are doing what is right, when our purposes and views are high and pure, and when, by obeying the cold dictates of society, we should incur still greater dangers, or fall into real errors."

Was the doctrine that he preached a perilous one? Perhaps it might be so—at least, as far as human happiness is concerned; for the laws and customs of the world are exactly like the military code of Great Britain, which strictly forbids a man to fight a duel, and disgraces him if he refuses.

Helen Barham again looked up in his face, and replied, at once—"I will do anything that you please. Tell me what I ought to do! I am sure, as I said before, you will not tell me wrong; and I am sure, also, that when I am away, however criminal you may think him, you will do the best for my poor brother William."

Morley gave her every assurance. There was much, however, to be thought of—much to be spoken of, between them; and he remained

nearly two hours longer with her, in that sort of conversation which, of all others, perhaps was the most dangerous—dangerous, indeed, to her, poor girl! They had to speak of all the subjects most interesting to her—of everything which touched her heart, or her feelings, which awoke memories of the past, hopes of the future, which aroused dreams, expectations, wishes, sensations, many of them still living, many of them gone, and sounding upon the ear of memory like a death-bell in the midst of the night. She had to talk of all these things with a man, young, handsome, graceful, captivating, full of varied powers and rich imagination—her only friend, her preserver, her benefactor. Alas! for poor Helen Barham!

CHAPTER XVI.

Such as we have described in the last chapter, had been Morley Ernstein's interview with Helen Barham, on the night preceding his early visit to Lady Malcolm. When that worthy lady herself returned, and entered the room where Morley and Juliet Carr were seated, she might well assure him that she was delighted to see him; for she was truly delighted to see him there, in that exact spot, seated by Juliet's side; and yet had she known that he was there, she certainly would not have seen him at all, for she would not have come home for an hour. Lady Malcolm loved Juliet Carr sincerely; she loved Morley Ernstein, too, with affection that had been going on and increasing from his childhood. She thought it the most natural thing in the world that they should love each other, and she was quite sure, to see them

wed each other, would very greatly contribute to her own happiness. Whenever circumstances were in such a predicament, Lady Malcolm, who, in these respects, was the wisest as well as the kindest woman in the world, made a point of getting out of the way of the lovers as fast and as far as possible, but, in the present instance, she discovered her young friend's visit too late.

Morley's story was quickly told, and Lady Malcolm soon became deeply interested in the fate of Helen Barham. She had lived long enough in the world to comprehend, at a word, the views of Neville, and the sort of danger from which Morley sought to screen the fair being he had befriended. To say sooth, on the mind of Lady Malcolm, the newspaper account of the duel had in some degree produced the effect which Morley had expected it would produce on every one. The bold and candid way, however, in which he now told who the lady was, and how the duel had arisen, not only removed all suspicions from Lady Malcolm's thoughts, but prevented anything like apprehension of Morley's being seriously attached to any one else than Juliet Carr; which—to acknowledge a sad truth —would have been more painful to her, than if her young friend had really been engaged in

some passing intrigue; for Lady Malcolm was one of those who, from seeing a great deal of the dissipated society of a court and a metropolis, believed that every young man must and would commit a certain portion of vices and follies; forgetting that those vices and follies, though we may turn from them at an after period and learn to do better, leave behind them stains of two kinds—stains upon our happiness and upon our candour—not only regrets, but suspicions—not only the memory of evil acts, but the knowledge of wickedness and of crime. The tree of which man rebelliously ate in the garden of Eden, was called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Had our unhappy first parent paused to consider, he would have known that he possessed already the knowledge of good, and that the prohibition of God referred, in fact, to the tasting of that which could give him the knowledge of evil. He did eat, and the stain of that fruit came upon his soul; and so is it with every child of man; we cannot know evil without a spot remaining on our hearts for ever.

However, such was Lady Malcolm's code, in respect to the licence allowed to men, and such, alas! is the code of many another excellent

woman. She was glad, indeed, to find that it was not the case with Morley Ernstein; but she was still more glad to find, as I have said, that the cause of the duel was no serious attachment on the part of Morley Ernstein to any other lady than Juliet Carr, and she now most willingly entered into all his views with the zealous benevolence and kind feeling, which she displayed in all cases, even when her judgment was not so much in the right as it was in the present instance.

"I will go and see her immediately, my dear Morley," she said; "and I and Juliet will settle the whole affair with her in five minutes. As you say, it would be very improper for you to take her into the country yourself. Why what would the people say, Juliet?—And then he might fall in love with her you know," she added, laughing.

But Morley answered at once—"There is no fear of that, my dear Lady Malcolm. I have a buckler against all such dangers. A shield that was given me accidentally on the very day after I came of age—under my own park wall too," he added, turning towards Juliet Carr.

But her eyes were bent down upon the back

of a book which she was examining attentively, and she only raised them when Lady Malcolm asked—"Well, Juliet, wont you come upon this good errand? Though I don't know, I am sure, where we can place her for the time. Must it absolutely be in the country, Morley? Why could it not be here? She could have a bed in the little room next to yours, Juliet; and be quite as well as in the country."

"For a day or two," replied Juliet, to whom she looked as if for approval of her plan; "but I think not for long, my dear cousin. The object is, you see, to remove her from her brother. Now as long as she remained entirely in the house, that object would be attained here, but the first time she went out she might meet him; and one could not keep the poor girl a close prisoner.—I will write to my father," she continued; "there are many rooms in our house that are never used at all."

"Oh, my dear Juliet!—write to your father!" exclaimed Lady Malcolm, with some warmth—"write to your father! You know him as well as I do, and that he would not give you board and lodging yourself, if you did not pay him."

Juliet coloured painfully; and Lady Malcolm,

perceiving that she had hurt her, said—"Forgive me, dear Juliet, I did not mean to grieve you."

"You do not quite know my father," said Juliet Carr, gently; "but I think I can arrange the matter with him so that he will willingly receive Miss Barham for a month or two."

Lady Malcolm looked at her, divining what she intended to do, and said—"You are a good girl, Juliet; but you must not be a hypocrite with me. Write to your father, and if you find any difficulty, let me know. We can easily manage the matter together then. The season is now at an end, or nearly so; I must go out of London very soon, and I can take you both with me. Nay, do not shake your head, I am very poor I know, but you shall bear half the expense, heiress!"

"And pray, what share am I to bear in this business?" said Morley, laughing. "You forget, my dear Lady Malcolm, that all I desired, and all I can consent to, is, that you and Miss Carr should kindly shield the reputation of the whole party, by giving that protection to this poor young lady, which, I as a man and a young man, should not be permitted to do by this good meddling world. I must insist, that whatever expense is incurred in the matter,

may fall upon me. I know already," he added, "how many claims there are upon this sweet lady's bounty. I have heard of all her good doings round Yelverly."

"Very little are they, indeed," said Juliet, with a sigh; "I wish I could do more. Still I have enough to bear my part in this kind act which you have devised for us, and dear Lady Malcolm will not be satisfied without doing something, too; so you must be content, Morley, with your fair third—and now I will go and get ready to accompany you at once," she added, speaking to Lady Malcolm.

As soon as Juliet was gone, and after a note had been despatched to Helen Barham, at Morley's suggestion, to make her aware of the intended visit, a fit of prudence suddenly seized upon Lady Malcolm, which threatened to be very severe, as, to say sooth, such fits were few and far between. Morley knew how to quiet the awakened demon, however, and when Lady Malcolm asked him anxiously—"Now, are you quite sure, Morley, that this girl has nothing of the impostor about her, that she is quite the sort of person she ought to be?"

"Perfectly certain, upon my honour," replied Morley. "Put your mind perfectly at ease,

my dear Lady Malcolm, I have not been deceived, depend upon it."

"You are very young in the world, Morley," said the good lady, still a little doubtfully; "and, remember, I am going to take Juliet with me."

"You may, with all safety," answered Morley Ernstein. "Indeed, dear Lady Malcolm, I wish you would, for many reasons; and, believe me, neither you yourself, nor her very best and dearest friends, could have such a tender regard for Juliet Carr's reputation and conduct as I have."

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed Lady Malcolm, with a look of satisfaction; "if that be the case, then I am perfectly content. But you must have made quick progress, Morley!"

Morley saw that the good lady had put a much wider construction upon his words than he intended, and not knowing how far her view of the matter might spread ere long, he thought it better to limit her imagination to the truth at once, although he certainly had no inclination to make a confidant of his love, while it was yet so new."

"Now, do not, my dear Lady Malcolm," he said, taking that tone of affectionate playful-

ness which he often assumed towards his mother's friend. "Now, do not tell all the world that I am Juliet Carr's accepted lover, for such, I can assure you, is not the case, and you may break many a heart for nothing. I do not even yet know that she is not engaged to some other man."

There was a sort of cloud came over Morley's brow as he spoke the last words, which gave Lady Malcolm an insight into what was passing in his heart, and that advantage over him which such an insight always affords to woman in her dealings with man.

"It would break your heart, Morley, would it not?" she asked, laughing, "if such were really the case. Well, I should not wonder—she must have plenty of lovers, and who can tell?—But never mind! Go along, foolish boy! Were you never told when you were young something about jesting with edged tools? Take my word for it, Morley, it is fully as dangerous for a lover of one-and-twenty to venture a joke in regard to his love, as for an infant to play with a razor—especially when he speaks in the presence of a woman! You do not at all believe that Juliet Carr is engaged, only you wish to be made quite sure that she is not. I have a good mind to punish you for your pride,

by telling you nothing upon the subject. However, I always spoiled you, and gave you too many sweetmeats when you were a boy; and so I must divulge, I suppose, that I know she is not engaged—either heart or hand. But that is not to say she will accept you, if you propose to-morrow. Indeed, I do not think she will.—But here she comes; so now you leave us, for we do not intend to take you with us to see this pretty lady."

Morley accordingly took his leave, and Lady Malcolm proceeded with Juliet to the house of Helen Barham. They were on foot with a servant behind them, for Lady Malcolm, as she had said, was not rich, and did not keep a carriage. The position of the house, its distance from the part of the world they were accustomed to frequent, and the appearance of several streets which they passed through to arrive at it, caused good Lady Malcolm's heart to sink a little; and, like a cowardly child, who has determined rashly to brave the terrors of the churchyard by night, she was almost tempted to turn and to run away before she reached the place itself. The greater air of respectability, however, which the street displayed when she did arrive at it, and the neatness of the house to which she had been directed, revived her

very much; while Juliet, unconscious of all that had been passing in her companion's mind, looked up to the windows, somewhat tired with a long walk through the streets of London, and congratulated herself upon having reached the place at length.

The door was opened by the usual maid-servant, who seemed somewhat surprised to see two ladies of such an appearance, and their names being given, she ushered them up to the drawing-room. The note, which Lady Malcolm had sent, was on the table when that lady entered; and beside it, Helen Barham hastily laid down a newspaper. Her eyes were looking wild and agitated, and they fixed upon the visitor with an enquiring look, as if her coming, notwithstanding the note, was quite unexpected.

Juliet had delayed a moment in order to give Lady Malcolm, who had lost some activity with years, time to climb the stairs, and before the younger lady appeared, the kind-hearted widow had taken Helen by the hand, and was saying a thousand gentle and tender things to her, telling her how highly Sir Morley Ernstein had spoken of her, and what an interest he had created for her, in the bosom of herself and Miss Carr.

Helen was very much agitated with emotions

of many kinds, and during the few minutes that followed, those emotions increased every instant. She had just been reading, for the first time, the account of the duel between Morley and Neville; and the danger he had run, the wound he had suffered and had never mentioned to her, as well as the thought that it was in her defence that he had fought, had created in her mind a world of apprehension and gratitude, which was well nigh overpowering her at the moment the door of the room opened. Then, again, the kindness of Lady Malcolm, the benevolence of her demeanour and her tone, all moved her in another manner, so that the tears were in her eyes when Juliet entered. Helen suddenly turned her look from Lady Malcolm to Juliet, and those two beautiful beings stood gazing the one at the other, as if in surprise at each other's loveliness; but—whether it was that Helen read her fate in the exquisite and high-souled beauty of Juliet Carr, or whether it was that, agitation after agitation, and one emotion upon another, was more than her overwrought mind could bear, I cannot tell —she grew gradually paler and paler, and then sank down upon the floor, her fair head falling back upon the sofa behind her.

CHAPTER XVII.

All had gone well with Morley Ernstein's plans. Lady Malcolm and Juliet Carr had remained with Helen Barham some time, had tended her with care and kindness, and had entered into every arrangement with her for the purpose of removing her speedily from the situation in which she was placed. Each became interested in her almost as much as Morley himself, for there was in her that quality which does more to prepossess than even beauty itself, and which may be called engagingness. She remained very sad indeed, during the whole of the conversation with those two ladies; but that sadness seemed to them so natural under the circumstances, that it produced no surprise, and excited no suspicion, as to what

might perhaps be the real cause thereof. It was settled that she was to come to Lady Malcolm's house the next day, and to remain there till Juliet received an answer from her father, or till Lady Malcolm herself could execute her scheme of quitting London for a short period.

Thus, then, as I have said, Morley's plans were proceeding as prosperously as could be; but, alas! how often, and how sadly does it happen, that the shoals and rocks of disaster lie close to the port of success! It is strange to see how very, very frequently, at the very moment that all seems sure to the eye of human calculation, the will of God disappoints man's expectations, and the voice of fate proclaims—"It shall not be!" Wisely and excellently, we know, it must be so ordained; and human presumption certainly requires such checks, however painful they may be.

Morley Ernstein had heard from Lady Malcolm all that had been done; and a sort of feeling, which he could not very well define, prevented him from going to see Helen Barham that day. We, however, may well enquire, though he would not, what was the nature of his sensations? Was it that her society, with

the constant consideration of sorrows, and painful circumstances, was becoming at all wearisome to him? Not at all. It might have been so with some men, with those who are volatile as well as eager, the straw-fire of whose enthusiasm is quenched as soon as lighted. But such was not the case with Morley Ernstein. He was, as we have seen, often struggled for by two spirits, but both spirits were powerful and resolute, and their action was to give energy and perseverance to all he undertook.

Was it that he himself, notwithstanding his love for Juliet Carr—love, which was every moment becoming more ardent and passionate—felt in the society of Helen Barham, a charm that he would not indulge in?—that there was a pleasure in soothing and consoling her, a degree of excitement in sitting beside her, talking with her over all her inmost feelings, dwelling with her upon the past, consulting with her upon the future—a sentimental luxury, if we may so call it, in the very tenderness of his compassion which he knew to be dangerous, if not wrong?

Perhaps it was so. There was a vague impression upon his mind that it was something like wronging Juliet Carr to give so much of his tenderness to another; and the higher spirit

having then the power, he resisted his inclination, and did not go. But that fact itself made him listless.

Morley remained in his own room, writing and reading, and had not been out since he left Lady Malcolm, when a note was brought up in Lieberg's handwriting. It was to the following effect:—"My dear Ernstein,—If you dine at home, will you let me share your dinner, for I have something of importance to say to you." Morley instantly wrote to beg him to come; and a few hours after, he and Lieberg were seated together at the social meal, waiting till the servants had taken their departure ere they approached the business which the visitor had to speak upon.

"This trout is excellent," said Lieberg; "your host shows his taste, Morley, in giving you trout instead of sea-fish at this season of the year. Sea-fish is intolerable at Midsummer, and especially as you English people dress yours. Who could endure the thought of frying and grease; or even of boiled fish and lobster sauce, cayenne pepper, and anchovy, and all the concatenation of horrors which follow the invariable dish of fish, at an ordinary English table. Trout or smelts are the only

things tolerable at this season of the year. I must have had a presentiment that you would have trout to-day, when I invited myself to dine with you. Do you give in to the doctrine of presentiments, Morley?"

"All men, I suppose, have a vague superstition of the kind in regard to great events; but I do not think, Lieberg, that supernatural warnings would be wasted upon a dish of trout."

"I don't see why," replied Lieberg. "These little things are great to little men; and if, as I believe, the whole universe around us swarms with kindred spirits, only separated from us by the thin partition of our mortal clay, interesting themselves in our happiness, and giving us intimation of things that affect our present state, I do not see why one of these same aërial brethren of ours should not tap at the wainscot to tell me that there is a dish of trout, or any other little pleasant sin, awaiting me at the house of my friend."

Morley smiled in spite of himself; for the knowledge that Lieberg had come to speak to him upon some important business, and the fact of being obliged to wait till after dinner to know what that business was, oppressed his eager spirit, and occupied his thoughts too much for him to

relish any ordinary conversation. "I should not think," he replied, "that they would take the trouble of knocking at all, except upon great occasions."

"True," replied Lieberg. "But men's estimation of what are great occasions is various. Some may think death itself but a light thing, and a bad dinner a very serious one. I do not know that I am not of that opinion myself. I certainly know one thing—that I would rather die a thousand times, than live on, forty or fifty years, gorging fat pork every day, as I have seen your peasantry in Hampshire."

Adam Gray, who stood behind his master's chair, and the waiter, who was taking away Lieberg's plate, were both on the broad grin; but he went on, with the same grave face, treating habitually the servants who were in the room exactly as if they had no being for him, except in so far as the moving about of various objects in the room was concerned.

"But tell me, Ernstein," he said, "now that we are talking metaphysically, are you not a predestinarian?—but, indeed, I am sure you are."

"In truth, my dear Lieberg," replied Morley, "I think we know very little of the matter. I

believe in God's overruling providence. I believe in his foreknowledge of all that must take place. I believe that it is by his will or permission that it does take place; but still I believe in man's responsibility for his own actions, and in his perfect freedom to choose between good and evil!"

"And in that of spirits, too?" demanded Lieberg, gravely.

"Really, I have never considered the matter, with reference to such personages as that," replied Morley, with a laugh. "I think it better to mind my own business, and not to pry into their affairs. But really, Lieberg, your mixture of moral philosophy and roast lamb, metaphysics and mint sauce, is too German for my English understanding."

Lieberg in turn laughed, saying—"It is not very usual table-talk, I confess, but it was suggested to me by the subject that brought me here to-day. One part of my creed is, that persons who are destined to affect each other's fate, are generally brought together by a power manifestly superior to their own will, and that—struggle against it as much as we please—the overruling hand which is upon us links in act with act, life with life, and circumstance with

circumstance, in such a manner as to connect two persons together in particular events by means the most unlikely."

"Well!" exclaimed Morley, eagerly, and with his curiosity greatly excited—"well, Lieberg, what then? How does this bear upon the matter?"

"Why, I think, my dear Morley," replied Lieberg, "that you and I seem destined by fate, though, perhaps, not by disposition, to act together. Our first acquaintance was strange. The singular accident that happened to you; the danger that you ran; the fit of sickness that followed; my having a week or ten days to spare, for the purpose of nursing you;—all gave a marked commencement to our intimacy; and now, many other things are combining to compel us, whether we will or not, to co-operate in matters of some moment."

"Indeed!" said Morley. "Can you not tell me in what respect?"

"Not just at present," replied Lieberg. "But, to look once more to the past, I can recollect various curious circumstances which brought about our first meeting in the coach, and without which it could not have taken place. It hung upon the balance of a straw, whether I

should go back to Germany in the end of April last, or whether I should go to the south of France, when, meeting a young fisherman accidentally at dinner, I was captivated by his account of fly-fishing in the north, and went to bestow my idleness there. Then, again, I had actually taken my place in the coach from York to London for the preceding day; but a packet of letters which I expected, was delayed for two or three hours, by some accident happening to the mail, and I lost my place and my money rather than come away without them: otherwise we should, in all probability, never have met."

Morley paused, and pondered over the past. He, too, recollected the accidental circumstances which had prevented him from taking post horses and coming to town in his own carriage, and he could not help acknowledging that there was something strange in the whole affair.

There was something strange—there is something strange in every mesh of the fine network of fate, for the eye of him who examines it curiously; and every part of every man's history, if he could trace the connexion with other parts, would present points as curious and

interesting as those to which Morley's attention was now called. He did not reply, however, directly to Lieberg's observations, and both falling into a reverie for a few minutes, went on towards the conclusion of their dinner very perseveringly. At length the dishes were taken away, the wine set upon the table, and the room cleared. No sooner was this done, than Morley burst forth impetuously—"Now, Lieberg—now, what is it? I am anxious to hear."

Lieberg smiled, replying—"I see you are, Morley, and I will not keep you in suspense a moment longer.—I did not know that this man had such good claret—this is real La Tour.—Well, you recollect the story you told me about your quarrel with Neville, and the wild young scamp you wanted to save from what old ladies call 'his evil courses,' and his pretty sister, and the whole of that business?"

"Yes," replied Morley, impatiently, "I recollect very well. What of that?"

"Why, simply this," replied Lieberg—"I find that there is floating about London a note, or draft or bill of exchange, or something of that kind, for five hundred pounds, purporting to be from my hand. Now it so happens, that being tolerably well to do in this world of ours

—that is to say, having perhaps a thousand a year more than my habits or wishes require—I never gave such a thing to any man on earth; and having received intimation of the fact, I caused inquiries to be quietly made, as to the person who had taken this unpleasant liberty with my name. I have obtained pretty good information upon the subject, and I find that there is little or no doubt that the forger is no other than your friend and protégé, William Barham."

Few things on earth could have been more painful to Morley Ernstein at that moment than to find that full information regarding the crime and the criminal had reached Lieberg's ears from any other lips than his own. I have already shown the nature of his apprehensions in respect to his friend's future conduct; but his mind was too candid and straightforward to shuffle or palter with the open facts in any way, and he replied, after a very brief pause given to thought, "I am afraid what you have heard is quite true, Lieberg. I had intimation of the fact likewise, and intended to speak with you about it to-morrow. I trust and hope that you will not think of proceeding against this young man, and all I can say is, that I am quite willing

to pay the money myself, if you will consent to receive the bill without disowning the signature."

Lieberg laughed. "Oh!" replied he, "you value the young lady's smiles at five hundred pounds, do you, Morley? Well, if such be your arrangements, I will do whatever I can."

Morley paused, and there was a strong struggle in his mind. He knew what Lieberg suspected; and he believed that a strange view of honour, not uncommon in the world, would both prevent his friend from interfering in any way, if he thought that Helen Barham was likely to become connected with him by the ties of illicit love, and would make him consent to receive and pay the forged bill, and, in fact, enter into all those arrangements most to be desired for her very benefit. He was strongly tempted, it must be acknowledged, to suffer Lieberg to remain in the belief which he evidently entertained. But the idea of a falsehood, even implied, was so repugnant to his principles, that he would not admit it into any part of his conduct.

"You are mistaken, Lieberg," he said, at length. "I still tell you, as I told you before, that I have no such purposes towards Miss Barham as you suppose. I wish to spare her the agony of seeing her brother die upon the

gallows. I wish to save the unfortunate lad himself, who is a mere boy, and has been misled by others. But I tell you fairly, I have no intention whatsoever of even attempting to injure this poor girl in the way you mean, nor do I think there would be the least chance of success, even if I were to try. She is a girl of good principles, of firm character, and seems to have monopolized the whole of the high feelings which Nature intended for her brother and herself."

"You will certainly not succeed," answered Lieberg, in a calm and reasoning tone, "if you leave her any hope of your marrying her. If her brother were hanged, or transported, or anything of that kind, the disgrace would so strongly forbid the bans, that she would lose the expectation, and yield to your views very readily, depend upon it. Indeed, seriously, I think that it would be far the best arrangement for all parties. The youth would only have one light swing between heaven and earth, very soon over, which would relieve him from a multitude of cares. The young lady would be placed under the protection of a gentleman and a man of honour, one who has generously befriended her, who would treat her well and tenderly, and provide for her when it was

necessary for them to part; instead—as will most certainly happen, if you do not take her—instead of her falling into the power of some other man, who may be a rascal and a scoundrel, who may ill-treat and abuse her even while they live together, and abandon her to the public streets when he is tired. You will place yourself in the situation that nine young men of fortune out of ten are placed in, with only this difference, that instead of an opera dancer, a chorus singer, a stage soubrette, or any other mercenary woman, you will have a companion really attached to you, and influenced by gratitude and affection."

"Do you know, Lieberg," exclaimed Morley, "that I have scarcely patience to sit and listen to you. I tell you that I have no such intentions as you suppose. I tell you that I shall never dream of entertaining them; and that whatever may happen to the young man, Mr. Hamilton, myself, and two or three other people, whom I have engaged or will engage in the business, will take ample care that no temptation—at least in the shape of poverty and exposure—shall ever be thrown in Miss Barham's way, either to become the mistress of an unprincipled scoundrel, or be thrown upon the

public streets. Pray speak to me no more upon such a subject, or, on my honour, I shall think you the Devil himself."

Lieberg burst into a fit of laughter. "Well, Morley," he said, "if you will not take the opportunity that offers, I cannot help it; but, really, the chances in my own favour are now so great, that I, who have not such powers of resisting temptation as you have, must yield a little."

"Lieberg!" exclaimed Morley, starting up, and laying his hand upon his arm, "you promised me——"

"Ay," replied Lieberg, "but our position is very much changed now. I have now become a party interested, without seeking it."

"And will you," exclaimed Morley Ernstein —"and will you really follow the base example of that man Neville, and trade with the brother's blood, for the purpose of taking the sister's honour?"

"Sir!" exclaimed Lieberg, raising his head, and gazing at him for a moment, with his dark eye flashing fiercely. But the next instant he recovered himself; his brow lost its frown, his eye its fire, and he replied, "No, Morley, no. Put that on one side altogether, and rest satisfied that, as far as depends upon me, her brother does

not die. I do not intend to trade with her fears, whatever I may do with her gratitude."

"Then you assure me he shall be saved," said Morley.

"Nay," answered Lieberg, "I cannot promise that."

"Why not?" demanded his friend. "I am sure, Lieberg, you will not act ungenerously by him. Be generous at once, and let it not be said that you did a noble and kind act by halves. Save the youth, even though he be criminal, and aid me also in placing him in such a situation as to remove him from temptation to commit such acts again. Leave this poor girl to those who will do all that is possible to raise her rather than to sink her, to soften her present fate, and make her forget the many sorrows that have already befallen her. Indeed, indeed, Lieberg, she has suffered bitterly in heart and spirit, and cruel would that man be who would open before her a path, beginning in sin, going on in self-reproach, and ending in disappointed affection and unavailing remorse.

"Well," answered Lieberg, after a moment's thought, "I promise you, firmly and fully, as far as it is possible for me, to save this young man. In regard to my further conduct in the

business, I will make no promises of any kind. I will be guided by circumstances, and no one has a right to demand anything further of me. I confess I have become interested in the girl from your account of her, and I shall certainly like to see her; but you mistake me if you suppose that I am deliberately planning the seduction of a woman I have never beheld. Besides, I take it for granted, from all you have said, that she is as much in love with you as you seem to be with her, otherwise I think she must be a very hard-hearted sort of person. If she be in love with you, she is, of course, not likely to fall in love with me, and the matter will, doubtless, end as it has begun. So set your mind at ease, for she has three strong safeguards. If I find that she loves you, I shall stop short, for I never rival my friend; if I find that she is coy, I shall stop short, for I love not maids that are long a wooing: and if I find that she is in no way coy, perhaps I may not love her the better either. So rest satisfied, my young Don Quixote."

Morley, however, was not satisfied, and he determined to hasten by every means in his power the arrangements which would place Helen Barham at a distance from a more dangerous pursuer than Neville. On another point, too,

he was not satisfied—namely, with regard to the conditional sort of manner in which Lieberg spoke of saving William Barham. He did not see why the promise should not be positive, and he said, after thinking over all that had passed for a moment,

"You mistake, Lieberg, in regard to my being the least in love with Miss Barham; depend upon it, if I were, I should take a different tone with any one who spoke lightly of her. I am not the least in love with her, and never shall be. But, putting that aside, let me ask why you speak of saving William Barham conditionally; of doing what you can; of doing all that depends upon you? Why cannot you certainly save him, by destroying at once the forged draft, or whatever it may be, if I am willing to pay the money?"

"The latter part will be an easy business," replied Lieberg, "for I am not very penurious, myself, Morley; and, though it is entirely at your intercession I do it, yet, if I am able to save him, nobody pays the money but myself. Why I speak conditionally is, simply because, in this business, I have not the absolute disposal of the young man's fate. Other people know the facts besides myself. My banker, when the bill

is presented, will see that it is not my handwriting directly. Several of the officers of Bow Street are already aware of the business. There is such a thing as compromising felony, I have heard, in your law, and I can only do for him that which will not bring me under the arm of Justice myself. Let me warn you also to be careful, Morley, for we may get ourselves into difficulties, from which we shall not easily be extricated."

Morley mused, embarrassed; he had never thought of the circumstances that Lieberg brought at once before his view, and all he replied, for several minutes, was,

"The fact of the officers being aware of this has, I suppose, prevented him twice from coming when he promised. He has called here more than once at my request; but never at the hour stated."

"He is afraid of being taken in a trap," said Lieberg; and then falling into thought again, he suffered Morley to pursue his meditations uninterrupted. At length, however, he held out his hand to his young friend, saying, "Come, Ernstein, let us act together, we have had a little spar, but we will be friends again. You fancy me a much greater *roué* than I am, simply be-

cause I am charitable towards all human failings, and because I advised you to do what I judged the best for you—what I thought, and do still think, would be no great harm to any one. For my own part, I am a very moderate man in my views, I can assure you—a quiet, calm, sober, steady person, who, upon principle, never do anything *éclatant*, except when people drive me to it by trying to pull me back. Let us consider, then, what can be best done for this young man."

Morley shook his hand warmly, saying, "I believe, Lieberg, you have the vice of making yourself appear much worse than you really are; and I do not always feel sure whether you are not jesting with me, in advocating things that I never see you plunge into yourself."

"There may be a little joke in the matter," said Lieberg, "for depend upon it, Morley, men who have seen a great deal of the world, and have got the ferocity of their virtue softened down, feel a little inclined to sport with those who come upon them full of the sweets of innocence, and thinking every peccadillo a mountain of iniquity. But now, as I have said, let us consult what may best be done to save this youth from the gallows which he so well merits."

The consultation between them was long, and at length it was determined, that Lieberg should use every means to get hold of the forged document; that he should pay it, if presented, without hesitation; that, if possible, William Barham should be brought to confer with the two friends; that the spurious bill should be shewn to him, and that it should be made a sine qua non of his being forgiven, to go out immediately to the East or West Indies, where some situation was to be found for him. Pains were also to be taken to stop all inquiries on the part of the police, and Lieberg joined so heartily in every part of the scheme, that he left Morley with the charm of his influence fully re-established, and the mind of his young companion convinced that he had done him some wrong in the suspicions he had entertained.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHAT was it carried Morley Ernstein to the door of Helen Barham's house at so early an hour on the following day? Was it that his resolution had given way, and that the attraction which was about her had prevailed, notwithstanding all the considerations which had restrained him on the preceding day? If the angels are permitted to look into men's hearts, and see with their eyes of light, the motives, as well as the actions to which they lead, it must always afford a curious and sometimes an amusing, though very often a sad speculation to the bright beings above us.

So seldom does it happen, that man cannot find a valid excuse to his own understanding for following his own inclinations, that it is not to be

wondered at that Morley Ernstein drew out of his conversation with Lieberg on the preceding evening, a valid excuse for visiting Helen Barham. I do not mean to say, indeed, that he was wrong; but one thing is certain, his inclinations led him thither, as well as his reason, and he was not sorry that a just motive impelled him to go. Dear reader, it was very natural, and certainly not in the least blamable; nor does it prove in the slightest degree that his affection wavered from Juliet Carr. She was certainly a bright, a beautiful, and an engaging creature, that he went to see; but to Morley Ernstein, she was the creature of his compassion, of his benevolence, of his tenderness. "We take a withering stick," says Sterne, "and plant it in the ground, and then we water it, because we planted it."

Such was the case with Morley Ernstein, and now he went to do one of the most difficult things on earth; to guard Helen Barham against Lieberg, and yet not to assail the character of his friend. As usual, he was admitted at once, for Helen was now rarely out; but when he entered the drawing-room, and saw her, he could not help thinking that there was some difference in her manner towards him—at least it appeared so at first. There was a timidity, a shrinkingness—if we may use the ex-

pression—a faltering of the voice, a dropping of the eye, a want of that frank and straightforward pouring forth of excited and grateful feelings, which had hitherto characterized the whole demeanour of Helen Barham towards himself.

It puzzled Morley Ernstein; he could not understand the change. Perhaps the reader can; at all events he will easily do so when he is told, that Helen had been looking into her own heart, and enquiring what were her feelings really towards the man who now stood before her. Her emotion at the sight of Juliet Carr had first shewn her that there were strange things in her own bosom, and she had passed a sleepless night, thinking of but one subject on earth—Morley Ernstein.

She gave him her hand, however—a hand which was usually as cold as the marble from which, to judge by the colour, it was formed; but that hand was now burning with fiery heat, and the once rosy cheek had become much paler. As Morley felt that feverish touch, and gazed on her face, the cause of the difference in manner he had observed, seemed at once to display itself.

"You are ill, Miss Barham," he exclaimed with an eager and an anxious look, that made

Helen's heart beat fast, and her knees tremble under her. "For Heaven's sake let me send for a physician."

"Oh, no, no!" she exclaimed, "I am quite well, indeed."

"Then what makes your hand burn so?" he demanded, still holding it in his own, "and what makes you look so pale?"

"I did not sleep very well last night," she said; "there had been a good deal to agitate me during the day, and I lay awake thinking, anxiously enough."

"And of what were you thinking?" demanded Morley, leading her to a sofa, and seating himself beside her. "Nay, you must tell me; for perhaps I can relieve some of your anxiety."

Helen hesitated, and he added, "Nay, you must tell me; you will not surely refuse?"

"Refuse!" she exclaimed; "do you think I would refuse you anything, after all you have done for me?" She paused for a moment, but then, seeming to take a sudden resolution, she looked up, saying, "I was thinking of you—I only heard yesterday of your having fought that wretched man Neville, and risked your life on my account. I pondered upon many things, but that was one of those I thought most of during

the night; and I asked myself, what would have become of me if you had been killed?—I think must have died."

Morley felt that both Helen and himself were standing on dangerous ground. He was half sorry that he had come at all; but, shutting his eyes resolutely to all that he feared to see, he replied gravely, though in the same kind tone he always used towards her, "I had not forgotten, Miss Barham, the situation in which you were placed, and that it might be aggravated by the very fact of an unexplained quarrel having occurred in your house, between myself and another person; and therefore, to guard against the worst, I wrote down my wishes to two gentlemen who, I knew, would attend to them, and would take care that you were shielded through life from everything like danger and difficulty."

"Oh, I know you are noble and good," she cried; "I know it, I know it well:" and putting her hand over her eyes, she burst into tears.

Morley soothed her, and feeling that it would be best to change the subject as soon as possible, he said, "Where is your brother? I was in hopes that by coming so early, I might find him here."

Helen shook her head. "He has not been home all night," she replied; "indeed, he very seldom is. Sometimes I do not see him for a week."

Morley mused. "I came to tell you," he said at length, "that as far as this business of the forgery is concerned, I think you may consider him safe. I have seen the gentleman, Colonel Lieberg, whose name was used, and he has promised me not to proceed against your brother at all."

"Oh, that is joyful indeed!" exclaimed Helen; "then all danger is past, and I need not become a burden to Lady Malcolm, and Miss Carr."

This was certainly quite the contrary effect to that which Morley wished to produce, and he went on to explain to his fair companion, that all Lieberg and himself could do might perhaps be ineffectual. He assured her, at the same time, that he looked upon it as more necessary than ever she should be removed from the neighbourhood and influence of her brother, and from the house in which she then dwelt, till such time as an appointment in one of the Colonies could be procured for William Barham, or some means

could be taken to get him out of England, and separate him from his evil companions.

Morley urged it upon her in various ways, and with so many arguments, that she replied at length with a smile, though it was a sad one, "Are you not sure that I will do anything you tell me? I should either be very obstinate or very base, if, after all your generous kindness, I did not follow your advice precisely. Lady Malcolm is to call for me at one o'clock to-day, and I am quite ready to go. The only thing that embarrasses me is, that I do not well know what to do with this house, which my father had taken for a year. There are two or three months still to run, and I do not like to deprive William of a home when he chooses to have one. Yet Lady Malcolm says, I must bring the maid with me, otherwise he will find out from her where I am."

Morley undertook to arrange the whole of that business for her, to see the landlord of the house, and to have some person put in to take care of it, as soon as she was gone. He then rose to depart, though the chief object of his coming had not been spoken of as yet; but when he took her hand to wish her good bye, he said, "There is one thing that I must ask

you to promise me, and to keep your promise most strictly, without asking me why."

"You have but to name it," said Helen, looking up in his face timidly.

"It is simply this," replied Morley; "and it will not be very difficult to keep, I trust. Give me your word that, under no circumstances whatsoever, you will mention where you are going to before you leave this house for Lady Malcolm's, or even that you are going away at all, till you are actually gone. I say, to no one, meaning, not only to your own brother, but speaking generally, to no one—not even to my dearest friend."

He laid so strong an emphasis upon the last words as to make Helen Barham give a little start, and gaze inquiringly in his face. But she replied, the next instant—

"I will mention it to no one upon earth. I see that you have some strong reason for what you say, but I am quite contented to be ignorant of it, till you think fit to tell me—though, perhaps, I may not see you again for a long while."

Morley understood that she did not venture to ask the question "When?" and he replied, "I shall meet you this very night, I trust, for Lady Malcolm has asked me to spend the even-

ing there. Believe me, dear Miss Barham, it will be the greatest satisfaction to me that I have ever known, to see you there; for, under the protection of that excellent lady, and with the acquaintance and friendship of Miss Carr, you may set the frowns of fortune at defiance; and I trust that such sorrow—I may say, such agony of mind, as you must have been suffering when I saw you a few days ago, may have passed away for ever."

He let go her hand as he spoke, and turned towards the door, while Helen Barham, with her eyes gazing upon the ground, stood murmuring to herself—"And in those few days you have done all this!"

When he was gone, she pressed her hand tightly upon her brow for several minutes, and then saying—"I must not think of it, I will not think of it; it is foolish—it is mad—it is wrong!" she proceeded hastily to occupy herself with other things; putting by all the objects that she did not intend to take with her; locking up this drawer and that; sometimes sitting down for a moment, and sketching with her pencil some wild, fanciful head, upon a sheet of paper which lay on the table, and then starting up again, to employ herself more actively—struggling vehemently, in short, against feelings and thoughts

that called loudly for attention, in every pause of occupation. She had been thus engaged for about an hour, and the clock stood at a quarter to twelve, when there came the roll of wheels, and a loud knock at the door.

"There he is again!" exclaimed Helen, thinking it was the knock of Morley's groom; "there he is again! How kind of him to come back!"

The maid, however, was the first person who appeared, bearing a card in her hand, upon which was written — "Lieutenant-Colonel, Count Lieberg." The girl gave the ticket to her mistress, and informed her that the gentleman whose name it bore was below, and begged the honour of a few minutes' conversation with her.

"Oh, let him come up!" exclaimed Helen, gladly, recollecting that the name was that of Morley's friend, who had so generously agreed to spare her brother—"shew him up directly;" and she waited with eager expectation, well pleased to have an opportunity of thanking him for his promised forbearance.

I have before described Lieberg, but still I must pause for a moment to notice the effect his appearance produced on the mind of Helen Barham. He came up the stairs with a quick and

easy step, his whole dress being in the height, but not the excess, of fashion, his hat, shining like glass, held in his hand, his glossy black hair waving lightly over his high clear forehead, his fine eyes sparkling with that peculiar fire and lustre which rendered them so different from the eyes of any other being, and his lips bearing a mild and pleasant smile, while his whole air and look was that of a high-finished and graceful gentleman. There was not a feature, there was not a line, there was not a movement, that Helen Barham could find fault with; and yet, strange to say, when she beheld him, though prepared to be pleased, and ready to admire; though full of gratitude, and with a heart tenderly alive to kindness, an unaccountable shudder came over her the moment that her eyes rested upon him.

Is it that some faculty altogether independent of and finer than reason itself, gives us instant intimation of the presence of a being who purposes, or is destined to work us some grievous harm? Who is there that has not felt antipathies, for which he could find no motive, and against which he strove in vain, till at length something has discovered that the being thus strangely disliked was exercising some dark

influence upon our fate and happiness? Helen Barham did not strive to reason with her feelings; she resisted and overcame the impression, as far, at least, as her outward demeanour was concerned; and advancing, with the grace which she always displayed, she held out her hand at once to Count Lieberg, saying—"Sir Morley Ernstein, sir, has told me how nobly and kindly you are disposed to behave towards my brother. I need not assure you that I am full of deep gratitude; and most sincerely do I pray God to reward you as you deserve."

A strange dark shade came over Lieberg's countenance, but he replied at once, pressing Helen's hand gently, but not a moment too long —"Morley has been beforehand with me, then? I thought I should have been early enough to convey you intelligence which I was sure would please you, myself. However, I must not be angry with him; for the satisfaction of giving you happiness and relief might well lead him to steal a march upon his friend. I have a little, however, still to tell you myself, which he cannot know of, as I have only heard the intelligence this morning. I think, beyond all doubt, that I shall be able to obtain possession of the

draft without suffering it to fall into the hands of any of the myrmidons of justice. In that case, all danger will be at an end."

"But if not," said Helen, with her heart sinking at the idea of there still being so much peril—"but if not, will his fate then be sealed?"

Lieberg seemed to hesitate, and taking a seat near her, he looked down upon the floor for a moment or two, apparently in deep thought, and then replied—"It might be difficult to save him, if we cannot get hold of the draft ourselves, and destroy it. One would need to bribe the officers with some enormous sum; or else I should have to refuse to give evidence, which might place me in a dangerous position myself. But I trust that this will not be; I trust that, ere two days more are over, I shall have the document in my own hands. So let us not think of such unpleasant circumstances. You must have had, I fear, a sad time of it lately, my poor young lady. Morley's account of you and your fate has been enough to melt a heart of stone, and, I can assure you, it interested me not a little; so that I trust not only to be able to relieve your mind in regard to your

brother, but to do something more for your happiness hereafter, if you will permit me."

"You are very kind, indeed," replied Helen; "but were this once off my mind, I think, with the friends who have unexpectedly risen up around me, I should have nothing to desire or wish for. My hours would have been sad, indeed," she added, "if it had not been for the comfort and consolation which have been given me by Sir Morley Ernstein."

Lieberg smiled. "He is, indeed, very amiable," he said: and Helen blushed, till her face and neck were all one crimson. The words that Lieberg spoke were nothing, but it was the tone and meaning smile that brought the bright blood up into her face. There was a slight touch of indignation, however, in her feelings; and though her face still glowed, she raised her head high, while she replied—"He is, indeed, very amiable, and not alone amiable, but generous; ay, and good, too. He is one of those who, I am sure, would never take an ungenerous advantage of any one, not even to obtain that which he most desired in life."

"You are quite right," said Lieberg, seeing that the well of Helen's feelings was all pure.

"Morley's impulses are all generous and noble; sometimes, perhaps, a little too generous for his own happiness, and for those he wishes well to. There are occasions, my dear young lady, when our own gratification is the means of gratifying another too, and in those instances self-denial is unkind."

Helen did not understand what he meant, for she was a high-hearted, tender being, but by no means metaphysical; and Lieberg, seeing more deeply into her character every moment, skilfully changed the conversation to less dangerous ground, and, in the open field, where she was less prepared to defend herself, he put forth all those fascinating powers which he possessed, and which were far greater than it would be easy to do justice to. Helen listened with pleasure, and with some surprise, and to a certain point Lieberg succeeded, for he excited a kind of admiration; but it was the admiration of the mind, the heart had nothing to do with it; and even had the little citadel of Helen's bosom not been fully garrisoned, as it was, Lieberg would have made no progress that day in attempting to storm it.

There seemed, however, to be a greater impression produced upon himself than perhaps

he had anticipated. Often, in the midst of his brilliant conversation, he bent his eyes upon the ground for some moments, and then raised them thoughtfully to Helen's face, gazing upon her beauty, and seeming, as it were, to drink it in, but at the same time with a grave and meditative air, which took from it all offence.

With an art peculiar to himself, he brought up subject after subject the most unlikely to arise from the circumstances in which he and Helen Barham were placed, and he listened to all her replies with a look of interest, which was not without its flattery. He was surprised, it is true, to find her mind so richly stored. He was pleased and struck with much that she said, and his whole manner, as well as his words, shewed that it was so, while, at the same time, he never gave up—though he never presumed upon it—that position of mental superiority which he was so well calculated to maintain against almost all men, and which, when not painfully felt, has no slight effect upon the hearts of women. They do not always love those they most approve, but in general they love those whom they look up to, be it in right or wrong.

At length, however, as the hands of the clock approached the point of half-past twelve, and his fair companion became somewhat penurious of her replies, Lieberg, with quick perception, saw that his visit must come to an end, or be tedious to her, and he knew there is nothing so dangerous as to remain long enough to be wished away.

"She is either going out to meet Morley, or she expects him here," he thought, "and I had better take my leave at once. He will disappoint her ere many days be over, and then it may be my task to console. Her heart is not so far gone to him as I imagined.—I will now wish you good-bye, Miss Barham," he said, rising, "but I hope you will not exclude me for the future from society that, I assure you, I value highly. You love music, I see, and I am passionately fond of it. You like drawing too, if I may judge from that table. I am not without some slight knowledge of that art, and I possess some of the finest small pictures in Europe. I will not give up the hope of some day shewing them to you. However, for the present we have other things to think of; the first of which, of course, is your brother. I

doubt not, by this time to-morrow, I shall have good news to bear to you; I suppose this is as good a time to find you as I could choose?"

Helen was about to reply at once, that she would not be there on the following day, and to inform him where he would find her; but the promise she had made to Morley suddenly rushed to her mind. Then again she thought, "But surely I may tell him! He has my brother's life in his hands, and could never be meant——. But, no," she said to herself again, "I have promised, and he shall never say that I swerved from any promise to him, even in the least degree."

The consideration of all this, and of what she should reply, together with the consciousness that she was long ere she did answer, called the colour into her cheek again, as she said, with an evasion that she did not like to use,

"I am very seldom, if ever, out."

Lieberg saw that she was more moved than was natural, by the simple question that he had asked; but he himself was too much impressed by her beauty and grace to judge with his usual acuteness of what was passing in her mind. When he got into his cabriolet, his thoughts were full of Helen Barham.

"Beautiful, indeed!" he muttered—"Beautiful, indeed! This boy is a fool, with his advantages!" and driving on, busy with reveries of his own, he well nigh killed two people at the corner of Oxford Street, and grazed one of the posts with the wheel of his vehicle.

END OF VOL. I.

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